

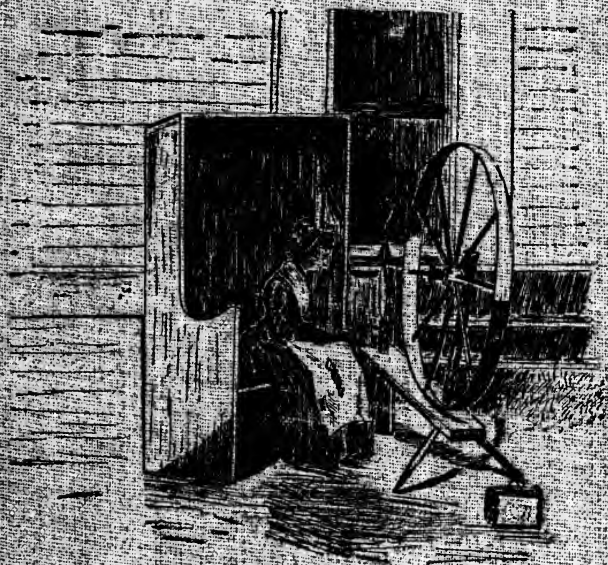
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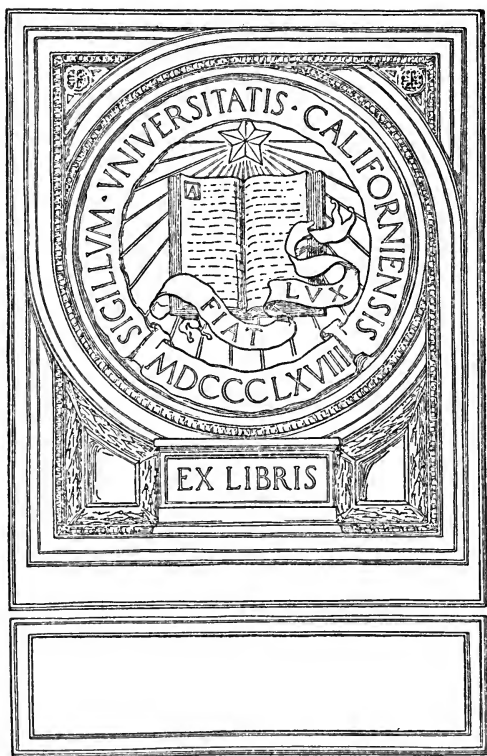
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OLD NEW ENGLAND LIFE.

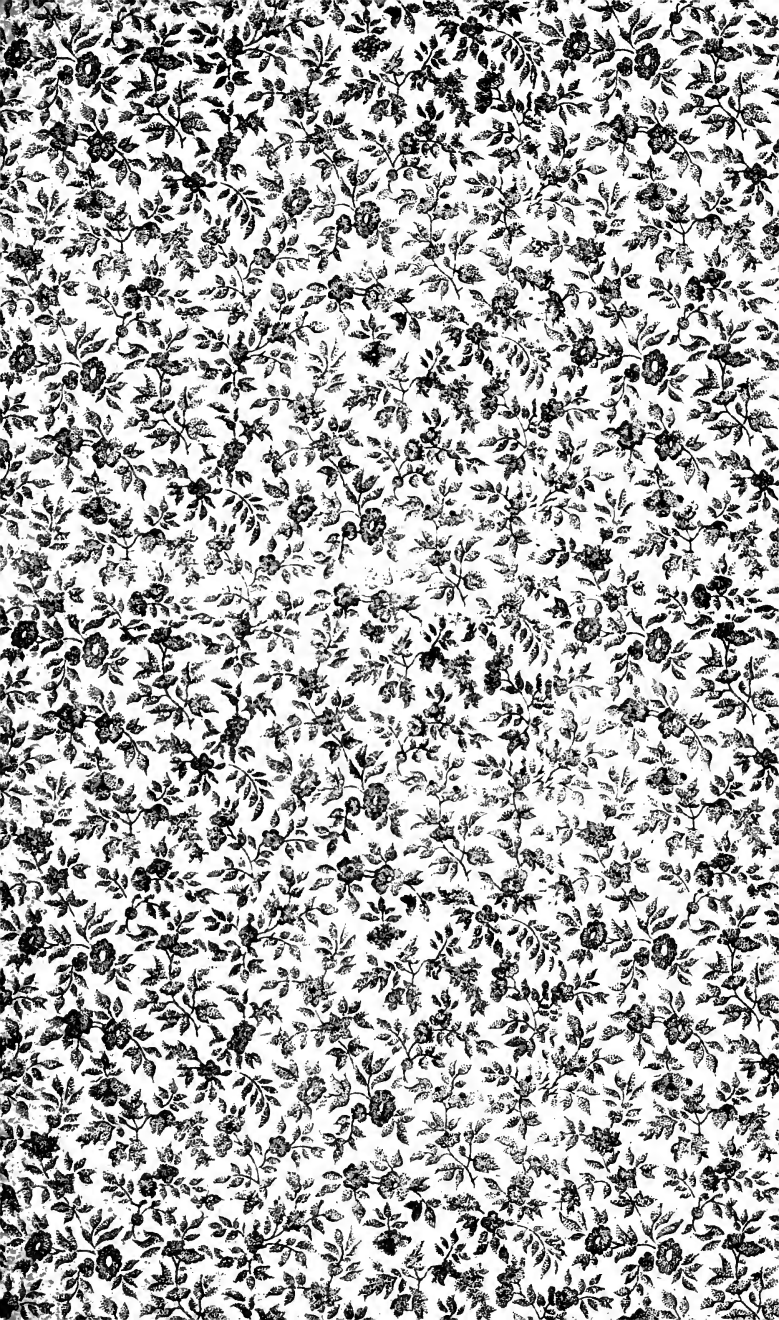


LEGENDS OF OLD BEDFORD.

Abram English Brown



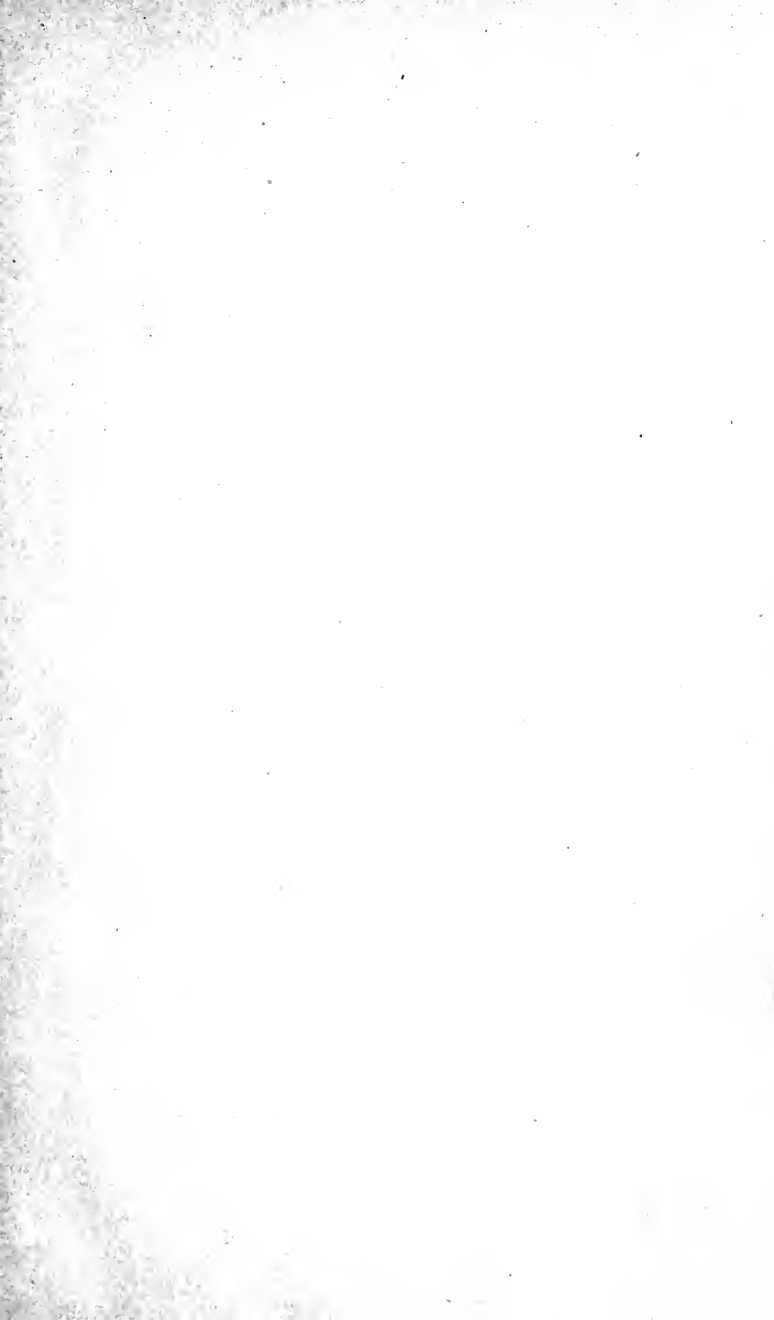
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GLIMPSES
OF
OLD NEW ENGLAND LIFE.

LEGENDS OF OLD BEDFORD.

BY
ABRAM ENGLISH BROWN,

AUTHOR OF

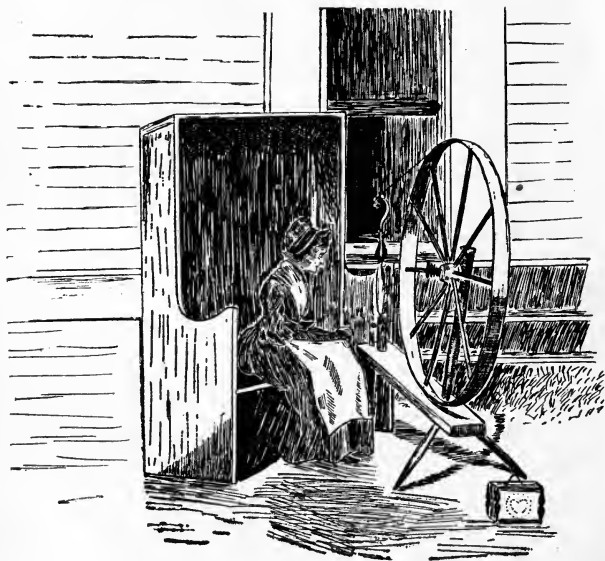
HISTORY OF FIRST SABBATH SCHOOL OF BEDFORD, HISTORY OF
BEDFORD, AND BEDFORD OLD FAMILIES.

'T is strange, — but true ; for truth is always strange ;
Stranger than fiction.

BYRON — Don Juan, Canto xiv. St. 101.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

R. H. BLODGETT, PRINTER,
30 BROMFIELD ST., BOSTON.



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“In those days,” said Hiawatha,
“Lo! how all things fade and perish.
From the memory of the old men
Pass away the great traditions,
The achievements of the warriors,
The adventures of the hunters,
All the wisdom of the Medas,
All the craft of the Wabenos,
All the marvellous dreams and visions
Of the Jossakèeds, the Prophets.”



DEDICATION.

TO MY GRANDMOTHER,
WHOSE LIFE WAS A BLESSING,
AND WHOSE MEMORY IS A BENEDICTION,

This Volume

IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a sentiment, so often expressed as to be classed with modern proverbs, that a parent who is a wise disciplinarian, when becoming a grand-parent is over-indulgent.

It was the good fortune of the author of this volume to be much in the society of his grand-parents, especially that of his grandmother. After a lapse of time sufficient to remove all sentimental prejudices, he would enter a protest against the commonly accepted belief.

It is to his grandmother that the author is indebted for the facts which this volume contains.

“Had I the ability, I would prove to the world that truth is stranger than fiction,” was an expression of hers that found lodgment in the mind of the writer; and while laying no claims to literary ability, he has tried to clothe a series of truths in a style of dress attractive to readers of all ages, knowing that the adult, at times, is not averse to stories especially adapted to younger readers.

The one credited with this series of truths spent her life in the place of her nativity, as did also several generations of her ancestors, she being peculiarly adapted by nature to gather and retain facts which would have faded from other minds.

The Author was not supplied with many of the melodies and fairy tales, which too often surfeit the youth of to-day, but in their stead, while sitting at the fireside through the long hours of the winter evenings, was entertained by his grandmother with true stories, some of which are herein related.

If the thoughts expressed at times seem too mature for such a listener it may be credited to her who believed in bringing the young mind up to hers rather than descending to the level of the child.

The Author admits that he has not strictly adhered to the time of the occurrence of the events, thereby aiming to guard against trespassing upon the sacredness of family ties.

The Author, at first, thought of including the leading facts with the History of Bedford, but at length decided to give them under assumed names for obvious reasons, and style them legends.

In order that the customs of our ancestors may not be lost sight of and we fail to appreciate their lives, a series of cuts is added, illustrative of the times and experiences narrated in this work.

With profound gratitude for the many kind words from appreciative readers of the History of the town, this volume of Legends is offered to them and to all who may peruse it, with the hope that it will not only furnish amusement but give helpful instruction.

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY NEW ENGLAND MAGAZINE,
C. L. FLINT, F. A. LAWS, AND HELIOTYPE
PRINTING COMPANY.

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LEGENDS OF OLD BEDFORD.

THE MYSTERIOUS ROOM.

FIRST EVENING.

PRISCILLA, you go to bed; I'm the one the gentleman wants to see," was the imperative command of Sally, the elder of two spinster sisters, to the younger.

It was a winter night. The flames of the broad, open fireplace, in the absence of the needless candle, made more sharp and vivid the shadows on the opposite wall, not only of Priscilla, but a neighboring swain, Amariah Quimby, whose glances of inquiry seemed to alternate from the face of doubtful years to the stars, plainly visible through the broad chimney, up which the hickory smoke was winding.

The pertinacity of the angular creature, whose command opens our story, made it evident to the youthful suitor that no advances from him could be received there, unless made to the one who had just entered, whose age gave her the precedence in household affairs and which she determined, as did also her aged parents, should give her the first right to the attention of the gentlemen. Having no desire to submit himself to the whims of that angular personage with the aquiline nose, Amariah took down his three cornered hat from the old oaken peg, cast a farewell

glance at Priscilla, for he had tender feelings towards her, and hastened home, adding another to the long list of those who had met with similar disappointment.



"Priscilla, you go to bed; I'm the one the gentleman wants to see."

The other members of the family are two broad-shouldered, hard-fisted brothers and the father and mother of the four children, both far advanced in life. A homespun gown of blue was the every day costume of the girls, while that of the boys was a loose skirted frock and trousers of home manufacture. A broad, ruffled cap and kerchief of blue and white plaid, carefully folded over the shoulders, finished the mother's costume. That of the boys was good enough for the father, with an added fixture in the way of a broad leather apron that saved the home-

spun frock and breeches, which latter came only to the knee to meet the long stockings that completed the dress of the lower limbs. The ancestral dwelling, facing square to the south, had never known the painter's brush outside or in. On entering it, one step down was taken, thus bringing the floors a little below the level of the ground. Their white surfaces revealed no lack of faithful scouring, neither did the amply shelved dresser, on which was arranged in maidenish precision the scanty supply of pewter and time-honored blue ware.

The singing of the huge-mouthed tea-kettle on the crane, with the hum of the ever busy wheel, furnished the music for the living room. The sameness of the best room was broken by the well-sanded floor, where grotesque figures of the broom showed an attempt at an artistic flourish; the solid mahogany table, its surface waxed and rubbed until the copy of Holy Writ that lay upon it, was mirrored to double thickness; and the closely curtained bed of down in the corner; these, with a few straight-backed chairs against the wall, made the company room. Few visitors came here, so there was little use for this apartment. Of the upper rooms one only, that dingy north-east corner with its bars and bolts, interests the reader. None but the stealthy footstep of the tyrannical owner ever stopped at its threshold. What was within and what became of a slowly accumulating wealth, none knew, other than he whose "Don't you dare," sent a chill through every member of the household, held in subjection through fear of the husband and father.

To live in this house with any degree of safety, to say nothing of comfort, was to be perfectly submis-

sive to the iron will wrapped up in a little, wrinkled, bowed, weird figure, whose address as father was obtained through fear rather than respect, on the part of the four children, who were kept from securing the benefit to be obtained from the few weeks of school that the town provided, because of the ever increasing penuriousness of this narrow minded parent.

The godly minister of the town, after much anxiety, called at the home of the Pendletons, and in the discharge of his duty asked for the tottering sire, when the good wife meekly answered, "He's in that room and I am afraid to call him, for he always comes out in a rage if I call him for any other purpose than to come to his meals or to take money; he won't dare to say anything to you or when you are here, but when you are gone he'll act the worse and scold the more; but I'll call him, for you are aware that no one on earth dares to go to that room." With these words the good woman left the room.

Mr. Whitford regretted that he was liable to be the occasion of another scolding from the head of this family to a most faithful companion, yet, with the hope that he might be the means of doing good, he allowed him to be thus called.

"Father, you'd better come down and see Parson Whitford," were the words echoed through the unfinished rooms above, soon followed by the sound of the clumsy key being turned in the rusty lock and the clattering of the hard brogans of the father of the Pendleton family.

"Eh, eh — good morning, Parson Whitford. How do you do this cold morning?" were the words of salutation that met a warm response from the rever-

end gentleman, while the smile on the little russet face showed plainly that his "good morning" was only superficial.

"Mr. Pendleton," said Parson Whitford, "I came up to tell you that a friend of mine is about to open a private school in the village and I want you to send the children."

"Eh, eh," began the little man, Mr. Pendleton had a slight catch in his speech which served as a prelude to his remarks and was generally regarded by the family as a warning of something unpleasant to follow. "Eh, eh — send them great boys and gals to school, big enough to go to meetin' barefoot, send 'em to school? I guess not; and I guess they'd be ashamed to be seen there anyhow."

"But," continued the pastor, "the expense is not great."

"Eh, eh — expense, hey? Do you think I'm going to send myself to the town for the sake of eddicating them children?" interrupted the little man.

"No, Mr. Pendleton, I know very well you can send them without laying yourself liable to any suffering and with no sacrifice on your part that you will ever feel, for we all know that you have a plenty of this world's goods," continued the good pastor.

"Eh, eh — I guess you are talking about what you don't know," replied the little man with a scuff of the feet, plainly telling to the good wife that the wrath of her husband was getting fully aroused, and the dreaded outburst was not far distant. But, thought she, if he will only keep calm till Mr. Whitford is gone, I will bear it without a word of complaint.

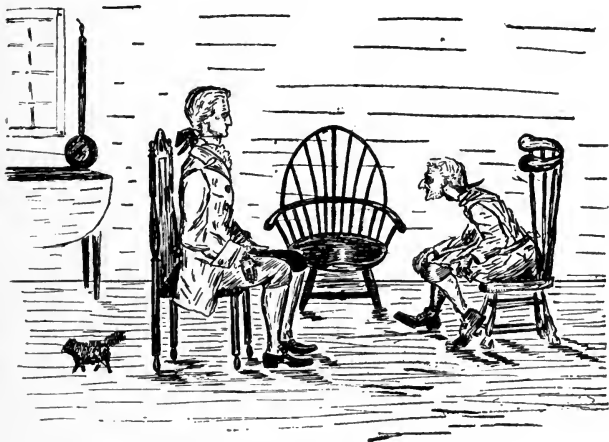
Like many a faithful wife, Mrs. Pendleton was willing to suffer alone rather than expose the faults of her husband, and she was a sufferer too. Only a small part of the management of the household came to her, save to spin, churn and plan to have her sons and daughters decently attired on Sundays, and comfortable on week days.

"Now, Mr. Pendleton," continued the minister, "I feel it my duty as the clergyman of this town, and your pastor, as well as that of a friend, to plainly say to you, that to allow your sons and daughters to go on in life with no more advantages than they have enjoyed, is a great wrong. I know they are quite well advanced in life and to some might seem too old to attend school, but the one we are to have this winter is for adults and they won't feel out of place there. And," he continued, "Mr. Pendleton, I fear if your children ever come in possession of your wealth they will spend it unwisely, because of the little opportunity they have had of mingling with others and securing the knowledge necessary to make their way in the world."

Mr. Pendleton bore this plain talk from his pastor with as much grace as it was possible for him to show, and, with an occasional scuff of the feet, suppressed his wrath, while Mr. Whitford, determined to do his full duty, added, "Mr. Pendleton, I fear you are breaking the commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other Gods before me,' and that your God is locked up in that room where you spend so much of your time, but you must know, brother Pendleton," striving to touch the heart of the little russet-faced man by introducing a more familiar address, "that the time is not far distant when you and I must

leave all that we have accumulated here and give an account of our stewardship to the great Judge above."

"Eh, eh—leave all, hey? Well, I guess I shan't have much to leave, and if I did as you want me to, I shouldn't have enough to bury me," replied Mr. Pendleton, with the emphasis of a double scuff of his feet.



The Parson and the Miser.

"Now, my friend," said the good pastor, rising to go, "I hope your money will spend well and that you will see that you are not fully discharging your duty towards the children whom your kind, Heavenly Father has given you, in depriving them of an ordinary education. There is a very homely saying which is replete with truth, 'What is got over the devil's back goes under his feet,' and I feel that robbing children of an ordinary means of obtaining a living, is a kind of cheating, and I doubt not, Mr.

Pendleton, at some future time, those idols I have reason to believe you are carving out in that lonely room, will fall down and crush you or your blameless children, and God forbid, even bring trouble to your faithful wife in this world. You know full well the Kingdom of Heaven has no mansion for any one who prefers other Gods than Jehovah and seeks for salvation through any other source than His Son."

After a word of encouragement, kindly given to the trembling mother, who had ventured from the kitchen on observing that the conversation was drawing to a close, the good pastor retired, and the miserly tyrant crept off to his den without a word that had been feared by his faithful companion and the girls, who soon appeared from their hiding places. Sally at once went with her broom to the best room, where their pastor had been entertained, and repaired the figures in the sanding as well as she could, while Priscilla revived the hum of the great wheel. As soon as Mr. Whitford's chaise was well down the hill, Seth and Saul, the two sons, came from the rickety barn, where they tremblingly did the father's bidding when he was at home, and with some degree of confidence, planned for an attack on the iron bound apartment when he was away. When the time came for carrying out their plans, they somehow lost what courage they had and, partly because of their regard for their mother, failed to carry out any attack that they had hoped to make.

The drifting snow that whistled about the house, together with the intense interest of this evening's story, for grandma was in her happiest mood, had so charmed the listener that he now, for the first time, broke out with indignation, "Well, grandma, I should say those folks were fools to be so run over

by that old man. I wish I had been one of them, I would have upset his den and found out what he had there that made him such a terror to all the folks."

"Ah, but my child," said grandma, "if you had been one of them you would have done no better. You must know, or will some day learn, that when people are kept down and hardly allowed to think for themselves, they grow up with a very different spirit from that which controls people who are sent to school and clothed so that they feel at ease in the company of others, and mingle with the outside world. Why, my child, there was no such thing as a newspaper or book in that home, and the almanac was about all they had except the Bible, and those four children had so little learning that they could read them with but little understanding. I tell you, Ned, that people kept under as they were all their early life, have but little courage. It is impossible for you to fully appreciate their position, for these times are so very different from the days when Hezekiah Pendleton ruled that household, but you can learn from what I tell you of these people, to more fully appreciate the blessings with which you are surrounded and cease wishing you were rich as I so often hear you express it, for you must see from what I have already told you that wealth did not bring contentment or even comfort in this case."

"But, grandma, will you tell me what Mr. Pendleton did all the time in that dark room?" anxiously inquired the boy, seeing that grandma was about to close the story for the evening.

"Well, my child, you will have to wait until another evening, I guess, for I have a good deal more

that I can tell you about the family and their associates which I hope will be of profit to you as well as amusement. The question you have now asked me was the subject of wonder and speculation fully twenty years in this community; some would say he was there alone in meditation with God, but they would soon give up that idea, knowing that one who meditated upon the mind and character of the Divine One could not conduct himself as he did for a single day, to say nothing of years. Some thought he was in league with the ruler of the realm of darkness, but as his family and the town-folks had to wait till death opened the door, I think it won't be unreasonable for you to wait awhile; but don't spend your time in wondering over that question, rather seek to be contented, and by doing your duty show that you appreciate your many blessings."

With a good-night from the venerable lady, the happy youth was soon asleep to dream of that mysterious room.

SECOND EVENING.

ACROSS the meadow, by the side of the hill, lived a thrifty farmer, Jacob Briggs, whose family consisted of wife Lucy and two burly boys of twelve and fourteen years, named George and Josiah, respectively. Now this "Goodman Jacob," as the people styled him, strangely enough had gained the confidence of the entire Pendleton

family, and all secrets and difficulties were entrusted to him, save this one. In fact, my child, Jacob Briggs was the closest-mouthed man I ever knew, any one could tell from the expression of his countenance that he would never betray the confidence of another, and I tell you, my boy, that is a noble trait of character in any one; if there were more such people in these days, there would be less trouble in society. If Mr. Briggs ever heard anything bad of a person he would suppress it, and he never allowed himself to tell a person anything that he knew would wound his feelings. He had justly won the confidence of the entire community, as well as that of the Pendletons.

During one driving north-east snow storm, about like that of the evening when I commenced this story, when no one was expected at the home of the Briggs', who should come puffing at the height of his speed to the back door but Seth, the older and coarser of the Pendleton boys, or young men I ought to call them, — for they had reached manhood physically, long before this.

Supposing that nothing but distress could have started any one out in such a storm, Mother Briggs hastened to the door with knitted brow and anxious face, and in spite of the insifting snow, feelingly exclaimed, "Seth, what is the matter? Has your mother had another of those spells? Why didn't you put the wormwood right on before you started? I suppose the girls are doing that,—but how bad is she?"

Seth, who by this time had shaken off the snow flakes that covered his rugged form, displayed a look not akin to such trouble, but to anxiety of another

kind, soon made known by his own words. Mr. Briggs, having been called from the attic, where he was shelling corn on a shovel, seated himself before the broad open fire with his good wife and Seth, whose clothes were already steaming by the flashing flames. After several tosses of the head and a number of attempts to clear his throat, Seth made known the cause of this unseasonable visit.

“What do you think, Mr. Briggs, that Dad did last night, when we were all drinking our catnip?” The Pendletons drank catnip tea unless a neighbor happened to sup with them. “Why, I haven’t seen him so good-natered for months to the whole of us, and ma’am thinks it is a warning of something awful coming. ‘The sunny hours before a thunder storm,’ she says. Why, he said he’d come to the conclusion that none of us was ever going to git married, and he was going to make an offer, and what do you suppose it was? He said he’d give to the one of us that would git married first, the Simpson farm. Now, what do you think of that?”

Seth was too full to give Mr. Briggs a chance to answer any of these questions, but went on to describe the Simpson place, which was well known to Mr. Briggs, as he was one of the assessors of the town, and knew the appraised value of all the real estate in the community.

“That’s a fine house and forty acres of good land, besides the cranberry medder, and he says he means it too,” continued Seth.

“Do tell!” exclaimed Mother Briggs. “I should think something was coming, and I don’t wonder your mother looks for some calamity after such a strange thing on the part of your father.”

"Now, what I want is, to git that place myself. I know neither of the gals will git it, for Sally is bound to be married first 'cause she is the oldest, and no one will have her; and as for Saul, he hain't got spunk enough. Now, what shall I do first, Mr. Briggs? I lay awake last night, and I thought of Patty Potter, who lives at the Deacon's. Do you suppose she would be willing to have me?"

Here was quite a pause. All three seemed intent on watching the flames as they crackled and rolled up the chimney. One might have known, however, that Mr. Briggs was giving the peculiar question serious consideration, from the manner in which he ran his fingers through his chestnut locks. At last, but not until Seth began to be a little discouraged, Mr. Briggs broke the spell and said:—

"You had better go to the singing school in the village. They say that is a great place for making matches. Go next Tuesday evening; Patty will be there, and when they get through the singing meeting, you just step up and ask her if you may have the pleasure of accompanying her home."

"But what shall I do if she says no?" anxiously inquired Seth.

"Oh, never mind that, the girls often say no when they don't mean it; but step right up to her and insist on going," said Mr. Briggs, roguishly.

Seth, whose face was aglow with hope by this time, burst in with the inquiry, "Shall I ask her to have me right off, or have I got to wait till another night? I can't waste much time, for Saul will be trying to git some one, and I am bound to git that farm, so close to Squire Smith's it ain't to be sneezed at, I tell you."

"I wouldn't speak right out the first night but, use your judgment and let me know how you get along. Patty is a fine girl and worth trying hard for," said Mr. Briggs, encouragingly.

"But, Mr. Briggs," responded Seth, "I have got to have these brogans mended or have some new ones before I can go to the singing school or anywhere else, and Dad won't give me any money; but I am going over to Larkin's shop before I go home and see what he can do for me. I guess he'll trust me, for he knows Dad will pay rather than git into trouble. I'll come over and tell you what Patty says; if Saul or the gals come over, don't tell them I've been here."

With these words Seth started across the lots for Mr. Larkin's.

"Now, father," said Mrs. Briggs, as soon as Seth was well out of the way, "those Pendletons have come to us for advice on various subjects, but this is a new one."

"Sure enough," said he.

"But," she continued, "what do you think has come across the old gentleman, that he should start out with this offer? Stop—stop; who is that coming?" she said, lowering her voice, before her husband had time to give an answer to her first question.

"That is Saul," replied Mr. Briggs; "now be sure that nothing is said."

Turning to Saul, who was well nigh in, she exclaimed with seeming surprise, "Good-morning, Saul, how are all the folks?"

"About the same," replied the awkward fellow, excepting Dad, and he is getting real good-natered. Why, he said last night that he'd give the Simpson farm to the one of us that would git married first."

"That is a new departure," slyly responded Mrs. Briggs.

"Yes, 'tis; but I don't believe much in it," continued Saul, with a doubtful shake of the head. "But Seth is all up on it and went off, as soon as we had foddered the cows, to git his brogans mended up to Larkin's shop, and the gals are a little stirred up on it too; but they can't agree, and it is of no use for them to think of it. No one will have Seth if he tries, but he says he is going to, though. Did you know, Mr. Briggs, that Parson Jones has bought the Goodnough farm and is going to live there? I guess he thinks this town will hire him to preach," continued Saul.

"Why no," exclaimed Mrs. Briggs, voicing the surprise of herself and husband; "when was that? Why, his wife is dead; how can he carry on a farm with no one to take care of the dairy?"

"I don't know how that is," said Saul, "but I must hurry back, for Seth is off and Dad won't come out of that den of his if the cattle ain't watered 'till night; but he'll blaze at us if we let them go for an hour over the time."

"Give my regards to your mother and the girls," exclaimed the familiar voice of Mrs. Briggs from the cheese room, whither she had gone to attend to the duties of the day. "And tell them," she continued, "my last churning was the best of the season, little too white, but good for winter butter. Has he gone, father?" the same voice followed with a whisper, which grew louder when assured that Saul was beyond hearing. I declare, Mr. Pendleton has got them pretty well stirred up, but Seth seems to be the most aroused and I hope he will succeed. I don't see why

he won't make a good husband ; to be sure, he is rather awkward, but a good wife will help him to overcome those failings, and with that Simpson place all clear, they would have a good start."

"I think so, too," said Mr. Briggs, "and I mean to help it along. I think it is real missionary work to aid in getting one of those Pendletons out from the iron sway of their father. If you see Patty, you just speak to her ; she will be at the quilting to-morrow, for she is always ready to lend a hand in all good work. You suggest to her that there may be an occasion for another quilting if she is willing, and that will set her to thinking before the singing school."

"Now, father, I am afraid you are overdoing the thing," said good Mrs. Briggs, reprovingly.

"Here, Ned," said grandma, "you can but see that the ignorance of the unfortunate children began very soon to show itself. No young man who had enjoyed ordinary advantages would have started out as did Seth, and, in fact, no father who had done his duty by his children, would have made any such proposition. As you have never been allowed to spend your leisure hours in a cobbler's shop, you will not fully appreciate the position of Seth when reaching the workshop of Mr. Larkin."

Seth, on finding that his job could be done right away, concluded to stop, and as the pair of well-worn brogans was all that he possessed, he saw there was no other way to put them in trim in time for the singing school than to wait while Mr. Larkin made the needed repairs.

"Seth, you ought to go to the singing school," shouted the little bald-headed man, who sat at a low bench in one corner. "They say the boys and

girls are all getting matched, and you won't stand any show at all after this season," continued he, little thinking he had touched a tender chord when he addressed this remark to Seth, all the time driving in the pegs to a stout cowhide of overgrown proportion.

"That's so," drawled out a portly fellow while turning about on his stool for a rest and a pinch of snuff.

"Yes, yes; that's just what I told my wife," said a third, who had just entered and stood with ox-whip in hand. "I expect all three of our gals will be spoke for, before that singing school is over; and as for my Jake, he is arter some of them himself."

Seth, for whose benefit these remarks had been made, could stand it no longer, but stammeringly exclaimed:—



Larkin's Shop.

"Well, I am going to that singing school; that's what I'm gitting my brogans fixed up for; not that I expect to learn to sing, but I'm bound to git the Simpson farm. Perhaps you don't know that Dad has offered to give that nice farm, cranberry medder and all, to the one of us that will git married first, and Mr. Briggs tells me to go to the singing school and go home with — with some one."

Here Seth wisely put a stop to his injudicious exposure, which called forth the exclamation from all hands, "Who? Who? Who?" but Seth shook his head, and, with a pleased countenance, began to tie the leather strings that held the freshly tapped brogans in place.

After promising to settle the bill as soon as he could get the needful change, Seth arose to go, when the little bald-headed man exclaimed:—

"My Isaac says that school is good for nothing. They don't learn a thing, for they are sparking all the time, and the master can't make them attend to time or tune."

This remark called forth from a tall, lean figure that sat partly screened behind a side of leather, these words, which he jerked out between the inserting and pulling of his waxed end:—

"Yes, but Patty Potter settled his case the other night when he stepped up to her, my Hannah says, and she saw it."

With these words ringing in his ears, Seth started for home, meditating as he went, and sometimes getting so lost in thought as to find himself talking aloud. "Now, if Patty Potter wouldn't let Ike Foster go home with her, perhaps she won't me," muttered Seth with a shake of the head. "But I'm

bound to try, and when she knows about the Simpson farm, and I'll tell her the first thing, she'll let me go I'll bet." Here the reverie of Seth was suddenly cut short by an unexpected shout from a figure in blue frock and high boots, that proved to be Hanson Page, a good neighbor, who was on his way to town.

"They tell me your father is getting pretty feeble and ain't going to be able to guard that garret locker always. Then I suppose, Saul, the gals and you will have things about as you want them."

"I don't know about that, but Dad offered the Simpson farm to the one that will git married first, and I'm bound to git it," unwisely added Seth, not thinking the news would spread like wildfire through the village.

Seth, in his newly tapped brogans, made haste for home and was met at the door by his good mother, who reprovingly said, "Where have you been all this time? The forelog is all burnt out, the eggs ain't got and they will all freeze. Saul has been off, and the girls are so full of silly notions about that Simpson farm that they are just good for nothing. I guess your father has spoiled the whole of you. Oh, 'tis a pity he hadn't put a little good sense into your heads by keeping you at school instead of bringing you up in this kind of way."

Here the good woman brought her complainings to a sudden stop, for the quick ear of Seth heard the father, and gave the warning, "Dad is coming," which was always regarded as the best reason for being busy about the chores. Mrs. Pendleton was a thoroughly good woman, and evinced not a little sound judgment when she dared to express her own thoughts.

"You, Ned, have yet to learn that many a good woman is kept from doing the most for her children or appearing at her best, because of a tyrannical husband."

"Eh, eh!" growled the little russet-faced man, before he reached the bottom step, "it's going to be a cold night. Where's Sally and Priscilla and the boys? The forelog is all burnt out and my cider is stone cold," continued he as he stood before the smouldering embers taking a sip from the tall mug that always stood in the corner of the great fireplace in order that the beverage might be of a temperature agreeable to his taste.

"I believe you have spoiled the whole of them children about the Simpson farm," meekly expressed the mother, as she slackened the big wheel to which she had hastened on the approach of her husband.

"The cup of steaming catnip served, and chores outside and in, all done, we will leave the family about the snapping, flaming fire for the evening. They did, sometimes, sit down together, but there was not that sweet sympathy and kindly feeling existing which you would enjoy or which is to be found in any home where each member of the household thinks of and works to promote the comfort of the other."

Thus grandma closed the evening's story and gave the usual good-night blessing.

THIRD EVENING.

WHEW! Whew! How the wind blows; been blowing all night," exclaimed Priscilla, while pouring the cups of catnip the following morning. "I'm afraid the roads will be blocked so we can't git to Cynthia's quilting. Saul, did Mrs. Briggs say anything about the quilting?"

"Yes," replied Saul; "and she sent her regards to the whole of you and wanted I should tell you she'd churned the day before and got some white butter, but I guess she was going to have some color to it, for I saw a good mess of carrot on the table."

"I s'pose she is going," said Sally.

"Yes; but she was afraid the weather was going to be bad," added Saul; "yet she said she had rather it would be stormy on Candlemas Day."

"Sure enough, this is the second of February. I'm glad it ain't clear and bright, for then winter would have another flight," ejaculated the good mother.

Here the inquisitive lad broke in upon the story by saying, "Grandma, will you tell me what you mean by Candlemas Day?"

"Yes, Ned; it is the second day of February. In the early days of the Roman Catholic Church, a festival was held on the second day of February, when there was a procession with many lighted candles, supposed to commemorate Christ, the light of the world. All candles to be used in the altar service during the year were consecrated on that occasion. It was thought by the ancients that a fine Candlemas foretold a severe winter. Various couplets conveying that idea are repeated on that day. The Scotch say:

'If Candlemas is fair and clear,
There'll be twa winters in the year.'

“ A family saying at my home was :

‘ Candlemas Day; half your corn and half your hay.’

Thus implying that winter was just half gone, and that half the supplies should be still in the barn. But, my child,” said grandma, impressively, “ such things are far from helpful, yet I heard them during my younger days and they seem to have an influence on me up to this time. I want you to come up free from such whims, and the impressions that are made on your mind now are going to be lasting. Why, I used to be told that to see the new moon through a glass was to have trouble while it lasted, yet it is an extremely foolish notion; but I must confess I had rather see it without the glass, for the impression has so strong a hold on my mind — but to my story. Now, my boy, if you don’t want me to wander you must keep your questions till I am through for the evening,” said grandma.

Seth, who was busy putting down the brown bread and cheese with his cup of catnip, here shouted, “ What was you over to Mr. Briggs’ for ? ”

“ For the same reason that you was, I guess. I tracked you across the orchard lot,” replied Saul.

“ Eh, eh ! ” exclaimed the little man at the head of the table, “ I didn’t suppose you’d all make fools of yourselves when I told you I’d give the Simpson farm to you, but I’m bound to stick to my offer now I’ve said it.”

Breakfast over, the brindled steers were hitched to the clumsy oak sled, and the boys, with the father, cleared the road in time for all hands to go to Cynthia Smith’s quilting. They were a little late, but in season for the first rolling and ready to aid in putting in the “ shellwork.” The Pendletons, mother and girls, were very skilful at quiltings, and their presence was most desirable on these occasions.

“ What a brisk set of hands, and all hard at it,”

exclaimed Madam Jones as she entered from the kitchen with cap-strings flying.

"Good-afternoon," was the salutation from side to side, as hands were extended from various corners.



Cynthia Smith's Quilting.

"Herrin' bone!" exclaimed Hannah Nibbs; "I always did like that pattern."

"Yes, 'tis pretty, but there's a deal of work in it," responded the Deacon's wife.

"But many hands make light work. Come, it's time to roll on this side," exclaimed Hannah, with the usual business air which she always assumed on such occasions.

"Mrs. Briggs, what are you thinking of? you seem to be in a serious frame of mind this afternoon; hope none of the boys are sick?" inquired Madam Jones.

"No — no, I thank you," replied Mrs. Briggs, wiping her glasses. "I never can put in herring bone and talk too, for it's rather of a particular figure you know ; but there's Mrs. Pendleton and her girls, who are so skilful in quilting they go on with as little concern as they have in footing a stocking. I was thinking, however, and I have been ever since I heard a bit of news a few days ago, that I would like to know who we are going to have for neighbors on the Simpson farm."

"Why," exclaimed a chorus of voices, "has Mr. Pendleton sold it?"

"No — no; but — but —" here Mrs. Briggs stopped.

"Oh, never mind, Mrs. Briggs," exclaimed Hannah Nibbs, "I know what you mean, and I ain't afraid to tell it, too. Father was over to Larkin's shop yesterday, and Seth was in there, and he said his father was going to give the Simpson farm to the one of them that would get married first; and I guess it will be Seth, for father said he seemed wide awake."

By this time the faces of Sally and Priscilla gave unmistakable evidence of internal struggle, yet they plied the needle with increased vigor.

"Remarkable step for Mr. Pendleton — hope it isn't a bad omen," anxiously remarked Madam Jones.

"A good start for whoever gets that farm," says another, while giving her thread another twist, when Patty Potter turned the conversation by remarking about the neat pattern in hand.

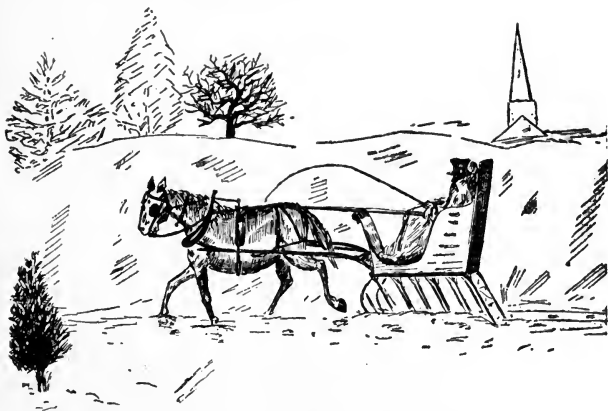
The quilt all rolled, two of the company volunteered to take it home and put on the binding; and as the wind began to drift the light snow, all hands started for home, fearing the roads would be blocked again if they stopped to tea, as was the custom on such occasions.

"Mother, did you say anything to Patty about Seth?" asked Father Briggs, while jogging along home in the old yellow sleigh.

"No — no ; there was no need of it. I just hinted about the prospect there was of our having some new neighbors on the Simpson farm, when Hannah Nibbs, she always knows everything, broke right in and said her father was up to Larkin's, you know he's always loafing about that shop, and heard Seth tell the whole matter. Just think — he had to go and tell after charging us to be so sly, and so it's all out," replied Mrs. Briggs, with apparent indignation.

"Perhaps Hannah would like to skim milk in the north room herself," said Father Briggs.

"But I tell you, father, Priscilla and Sally did look troubled when Hannah shouted that out," added mother; and it was so strange that Patty Potter should be the first one to speak and turn the conversation by admiring the neat pattern of the quilt."



Homeward from Cynthia Smith's Quilting.

"Well," said Father Briggs, giving the horse a cut with the whip, "I shouldn't wonder if Patty had the next quilting in spite of that irrepressible Hannah Nibbs."

"Now, my boy, about the time these events were transpiring in this town, the first movement was made in way of organizing a temperance society. Rev. Mr. Whitford, who was in the habit of drinking a little himself, as were most of the people, got some men from Boston, I think, to come and talk up the subject, and a society was organized, and many signed the pledge; but drinking was not looked upon with such disdain as it is now, and some of the first people would not give it up. Deacon Jones, in whose family Patty lived, entered upon the temperance work with a will, and, in fact, was so rigid, that he thought any one who did not join the society was worse than an infidel. People nowadays would more generally sympathize with him in his new departure. The society went on and flourished. They had meetings quite often; sometimes the minister would make an address, and again one of the doctors of the village. Much good resulted from that first movement, and I think there has been a temperance society here ever since."

"Did the Pendletons join the society?" inquired the boy.

"No; not all of them," said grandma, "for they enjoyed strong drink now and then, and you will see how they allowed the habit to get control of them."

If you had been at the home of the Pendletons one afternoon of the following week, you would have seen the boys making haste with their chores, and found everything done up before sundown, with a plenty of wood by the hearth to keep up the fire through the long evening. Seth and Saul took a hasty supper, and then, in their best trim, started off for the village to attend the singing school. Seth's newly tapped brogans had been well covered with beef's tallow and lampblack, which greatly improved

their ordinary condition, and to his mind looked "amazing nice." Seth generally liked company, but on this evening would rather have been left alone; yet Saul was ready to go with him, although not fully realizing the condition of his older brother's mood; he was supposed to know it all by the ardent, anxious suitor, who even regarded his brother on this evening in the guise of a rival.



The Old School-house.

The old school-house was torn down before you were born; it stood almost in the road, near the location of the present one. It was once a rude dwelling; the only door was on the north side. The furnishing for school purposes consisted of rough benches, and a high desk for the master.

In that house the singing school was taught, once each week. Seth and Saul were among the first to appear at the school-house that evening, and as it was their first appearance of the season, the salutations extended were hearty, and to some would have been interesting; but that irrepressible Hannah Nibbs had been faithful in spreading the story that her father

gathered at Larkin's shop, so the little sly notes from the boys, and the shy acts of the girls, were understood by Seth, although he had mingled but little in the society of young people. Among the different groups standing about the fire, Seth soon spied Patty and Deacon Jones. The inoffensive deacon, who had an eye single for the good of mankind, happened to notice Seth and Saul. As it was their first appearance at the school, and unusual too, his heart of sympathy prompted him to go to them at once, and in the kindest manner give them a welcome to the school; he told them he would like to speak with them after the hour's instruction. The deacon had heard some notes about the Simpson farm, but had given no heed to them, and was perfectly innocent of any of the charges being brought against him in the minds of some of the by-standers and whispered from side to side, one voice being often heard above the whisper, to the amusement of many.

"There," said Hannah Nibbs, "I did have faith in Deacon Jones, and his prayers always did me good; but if he will stoop to help Seth Pendleton get a wife, just for nothing only to get that Simpson farm, I shall lose all confidence in him and everybody else that belongs to the church."

"I should think from the way you talk," said a seat companion half aloud, "that you wanted control of the Simpson house yourself. I'm sure *I* would n't marry Seth Pendleton for all the farms in town."

"Nor I," exclaimed Hannah, as she hastily opened her singing book and began to run over the scale.

There was a good deal of whispering and subdued merriment through the session of the school, more than usual, and the order was none too good at any

session ; yet Seth, revolving the deacon's kind words in his mind, sat through the hour like a martyr who was under sentence and awaiting the hour of torture. He had made up his mind that Patty was his, that the deacon had given evidence of his approval of the whole matter, and with such a brilliant prospect before him he could endure all the annoyance of the whole school.



The Singing School.

At the close of the session, Saul stepped out and started for home, glad enough to again be free and alone ; but Seth lingered in spite of the jeers of the boys. He had an object in view, and was determined to accomplish his purpose. A wife and farm, instead of the tedious servitude at the old home on the hill, were objects of sufficient value to inspire courage and determination in any one of the most timid nature

and retiring habit. Presently the good deacon came up and said to Seth, "I am real glad that you have got started out, and I hope you will continue to come; I have a good deal of feeling for you all up there on the hill."

Turning about and finding Patty waiting for him to go home, he formally introduced her to Seth, who smiled as never before; but his words were few — he was too full for utterance. Patty, who was innocent of the charges brought against her by many of the school, did not fail to drop a word of encouragement, as she had caught the missionary spirit from her friend the deacon.

"Seth," said Deacon Jones, "you know we are forming a temperance society here, and we want you to join with us,"—a subject entirely foreign to that which occupied the mind of the anxious youth, who tremblingly assented without giving it a thought, and in fact hardly grasping the idea.

The company had disappeared before the lingerers were aware of it, and Seth mustered courage to ask for the privilege of going home with Patty. This seemed strange to her, for there was no occasion for such civility on the part of any one; but as she was anxious to help on the temperance reform, and thought it might be pleasing to the deacon to have Seth walk with them, she did not refuse, and Seth Pendleton had never seen a more happy hour. The deacon, being hard of hearing, had not caught the words of Seth when asking the important question, and he did not understand whether it was Patty or himself who was having the honor of the escort; neither did the boys and girls who watched the proceedings from various corners and hiding places.

A kind invitation from the good deacon to Seth to come down and spend the evening sent him home as happy as he ever went in his life. First he ran, and then he walked, all the time invoking blessings upon the head of Mr. Briggs, and promising himself in the stillness of that winter evening to always remember his good adviser, and vowing that he would follow him in every matter.

Saul had reached home a little before him, and there was a real bustle in the old house when Seth came in. Neighbor Briggs and wife Lucy were informed of the success of the evening as soon as the duties of the following day would permit. Seth soon blacked his brogans again and went to the deacon's to pass the evening, and continued to go, and soon became a member of the temperance society, although Hannah Nibbs did say, "He won't keep the pledge, and he is an awkward fellow, and I don't see what Deacon Jones is thinking about. I thought he was a more sensible man than to advise a good, innocent girl like Patty Potter to receive the attentions of a clownish fellow like Seth Pendleton."

Here grandma, realizing this kind of talk might not be helpful to the youth, stopped, and said, "My boy, you now see how easy it is for perfectly innocent people, with the best of motives, to have the appearance of doing evil, and to be condemned when they are not guilty. Deacon Jones was only trying to cheer and aid Seth and promote the temperance cause, when Seth thought he was gaining the good man's aid in securing Patty for a wife, and thus making sure of the Simpson farm. There is one thing that I would like to have you remember, and that is, the determination with which Seth went about this enterprise, and try to put as much energy into your efforts, although of a very different nature."

Only a few months passed before there was a quilt-

ing at Deacon Jones'. Hannah Nibbs was not there. "A little indisposed," said her mother when asked why Hannah didn't come, while making free use of the snuff, her only reliable solace, that always kept her nerves calm at a quilting.

A general clearing up at the Simpson farm told all the neighbors that the taxes would be set to Seth Pendleton the coming year; and so it was. Patty Potter was well located with Mr. Seth Pendleton at the Simpson house before the blueberries were ripe in the three-cornered lot, where she met her friends and took pleasure in saying, "You are welcome to all you can pick in our lot." Hannah soon learned to address Patty as Mrs. Pendleton, and treated her with much respect.

This change did not add much to the happiness of the Pendletons. Saul, Sally and Priscilla declared they would punish Seth some day.

"Just see what a spirit, my boy, and it is such as we often see, and what I want you to guard against—that is, a desire to ruin or make uncomfortable any one who succeeds in getting what we would like ourselves but fail to obtain."

Mr. and Mrs. Briggs were soon invited to drink tea at the Simpson place, and a better cup of tea or a better spider cake they both agreed they never ate, while they hoped Patty would never regret the step.

FOURTH EVENING.

ABOUT the time that Seth Pendleton and his bride Patty took possession, as the lawful owners of the Simpson farm, Rev. Mr. Jones settled on the farm recently purchased of the Good-nough heirs ; he cleared away the house and barn, and began to replace them with as fine a set of farm buildings as the town afforded. Mrs. Briggs often remarked to her family and to callers, that she could not see what Parson Jones was thinking of,—to come to town, buy a piece of real estate and erect fine buildings when he was a widower; but Mr. Briggs, who was famous for settling all kinds of affairs, from a large estate to a family quarrel, when overhearing his good wife, would decide this difficult question by saying, “There are a plenty who would be glad to preside in that new house.” It was at this mid-summer season that a shadow came over the Briggs home. Mrs. Briggs took a severe cold in the early spring, and in spite of all the faithful efforts of the doctors of the village, together with the best of nursing from her devoted husband and the good neighbors, all of whom were strongly attached to her, she went into a rapid decline, and on the last day of July she passed from her home and family.

Strange it seems to us that one so much needed in her family, and in the community so endeared, should be thus early summoned from earth.

“My child, you must learn that God’s ways are best, and if we cannot see it at the time, we must have faith in him and his promises and know he has told us, ‘He doeth all things well.’”

The neighbors were very attentive to Mr. Briggs and full of sympathy for him in his lonely condition, and it is true they went so far as openly to speak of the matter at a sewing meeting held at Deacon Sprague's in the following September.

The ladies there assembled, representing many of the families of the village, agreed that the Briggs home must be very lonely, and that Hannah Nibbs, who, by the way, had gone, as she claimed, "out of pure sympathy," to keep house for the family, was not the one for the place. She did not know how to manage boys at all, and George and Josiah began to show the loss of their mother already. While the conversation was at its height, Dolly Sprague, the deacon's daughter, companion and housekeeper, who was entertaining the sewing circle, came in with her span clean apron fully spread and announced that tea was ready. It was quite noticeable that Sally and Priscilla Pendleton did little during the afternoon but listen to the conversation about the Briggs family.

Tea over, and a committee chosen to pack the box that was to be sent out among the Indians, the others hastened home. The "Pendleton girls," as they were called by the townfolks, took a short cut over the hill, down "Love Lane," by the Briggs house, and just dropped in to call on Hannah Nibbs and inquire after the household.

"Why didn't you go to the sewing meeting at Dolly Sprague's?" said Priscilla.

"Why didn't I?" replied Hannah, "how could I? You know I only came here out of sympathy, and I tell you here is missionary work enough to be done. I don't know but my sympathy will give out, for

these boys do require so much mending, and to keep them fed is a difficult task. But when I remember their poor mother, I am so full of sympathy that I stay on, and while I am here the Indians and every other savage will have to get along without me."

These remarks were made with an air of conceit that seemed to show that Hannah thought she had the full control of the Briggs house. As the Pendleton girls rose to go, Hannah said, "I don't think overmuch of Dolly Sprague, for I hear she pretends to sympathize with this poor afflicted family; but she never comes here, and I mean she never shall have the chance, though I guess she would like to."

"Yes," replied the younger of the Pendletons, "Miss Dolly is very kindly of the family this afternoon, and I presume would be ready to do for them, only you are here, and she wouldn't want to interfere with your affairs."

"She'd better not, or any one else as long as I am here," replied Hannah, with a toss of her head that seemed to imply, what Hannah Nibbs don't know is of little use to any one.

Early in her stay at the Briggs home, Miss Nibbs claimed to have done invaluable service by successfully warning off the rats that infested the house and were extremely destructive. In this, as in many ways, she applied what she had seen her mother practice. She went through the house, above and below, beating a tin pan with a cream stick most violently, thus calling the attention of the whole rat family, and shouting, "Leave this house, leave this house; go over to Dr. Preston's, go over to Dr. Preston's." At that time she entertained most unfriendly feelings towards the doctor of the town, so she tried

to perform double service by this peculiar warning — to rid the Briggs family of a great annoyance and to lodge the enemy at the home of the town physician.



Hannah warned away the rats.

Mr. Briggs and his boys suffered on through the fall and winter, while the pretended sympathy of Hannah was sufficiently strong to keep her at her chosen post of duty; yet every week, when paid her regular compensation by Mr. Briggs, she would say, "Now, Mr. Briggs, you know this 'two and thre'-pence' is not what keeps me here, for it is nothing but sympathy that tempts me to leave my home and take the place of poor Mrs. Briggs; she was a blessed good neighbor—" at this point she always drew out a faded red and yellow homespun handkerchief, and wiped the tears that flowed from her large gray eyes as easily as rain falls in April, while she made free use of her snuff-box.

A week before "March meeting," there came a fresh fall of snow, and Sally Pendleton had made up her mind that she would start out on a little mission.

She tripped down to call on Hannah, and Mr. Briggs as well; but Hannah, not seeming to be very agreeable, was soon left in the room alone, and Sally, with the two boys, went to call Mr. Briggs, who was in the lot getting wood. Sally had an errand with him, she said.

"Smart errand," said Hannah, as soon as they were out of hearing. I guess she won't make out much, although they have got money up there; for Mr. Briggs thinks more of himself than to take one of them gals to fill Lucy's place."

Hannah's whole conduct indicated greater fear than her words would imply. In response to her call for tea, Mr. Briggs and the boys came in, pleasantly chatting, and Hannah overheard in the conversation, "Can I go too, father?" from Josiah, the younger of the boys; the reply she did not hear.

She poured the tea with much nervousness, and seemed to have but little appetite. "Got a fresh cold hanging out that washing; nothing but sympathy would tempt me to do it," said Miss Nibbs, emphatically, with her face drawn down in a manner that foretold the usual shower, while she fumbled in her pocket, which was a false one tied, under her skirt, for the ever ready handkerchief of rainbow hue.

Before retiring for the night, Mr. Briggs got out his best boots, brushed them, and took "a clean shave," preparatory to an early start on the following morning. Hannah, who was at a critical point in her stocking, "setting the heel," occasionally turned up one eye, and having endured it as long as she could, burst out by saying, "I suppose you are going off with Sally Pendleton. Now, Mr. Briggs, you know I came here out of sympathy, and I feel it to be my

duty to tell you what everybody says,—that Sally Pendleton means to step into Lucy Briggs' shoes, and your poor wife not nine months dead. I wouldn't have thought it; I wouldn't have thought it; no, I wouldn't!"

When Miss Nibbs recovered from her hysterical attack, Mr. Briggs, feeling disgusted with the conduct of his housekeeper, gently said, "Miss Nibbs, I believe I paid you last Saturday, didn't I?"

"Yes," she stammered, "but it ain't money that keeps me here, it's sympathy; and to see you go off in this way makes me feel dreadfully for poor Mrs. Briggs' sake; her memory is precious to me if it ain't to other folks." The reply, in faltering accents, was followed by the ever ready shower that burst forth in copious drops.

Mr. Briggs was a man of but few words, yet he did venture to make one request, which was, that breakfast might be ready early, as he was going to Boston in the morning and would like to take the trip in a sleigh, the roads being best before mid-day. Nothing more was heard until early dawn, when Mr. Briggs was stirring the coals and the boys were hastening around to aid in the chores.

When Miss Nibbs appeared, it was evident she was suffering from a severe cold; yet she aided in preparing breakfast, all the time keeping watchful eyes on the movements of Mr. Briggs as he made the needful preparations and gave orders to the boys about the work of the day. Mr. Briggs hadn't been long out of the yard before Hannah ventured to ask Josiah which way his father had gone. On finding that it was towards the Pendletons, she came into the house somewhat rudely, and said half aloud, "Up the road,

sure enough,—that ain't the way to Boston. He's a liar with all the rest; yes, he is. I will tell Mr. Whitford before noon, I will. Yes, he's a liar and a member of the church too. I'll never go to communion again as long as he lives, I won't. When he gets home he'll come pretty short, I guess, for I won't cook anything to-day. I'm almost sick with a cold, all from hanging out them clothes yesterday. Who would do all this for sympathy but me?"

"Sally," squeaked out a roguish youngster, who had become disgusted with the conduct of the house-keeper, "there she goes now;" and the passing sleigh, containing Mr. Briggs and Sally Pendleton, just met the eyes of Miss Nibbs, as the bells jingled by the door on the way to Boston.

"Just as I expected. Sally Pendleton was over here yesterday and teased Mr. Briggs to take her to Boston. Just as likely as not she is going after her wedding fixin's."

She threw herself into the rocking-chair and continued the impassioned soliloquy: "What treatment! When I came here and left mother alone with the girls, of course they were lonesome after father's death, just as much as Mr. Briggs was after burying his wife. I won't stay any longer. I'll pack up my things and go right straight home, and when he comes back he may get his own supper or go without. I guess he'll have to. Who will get it for him and these hungry boys?"

"Sally!" cried out the same roguish voice from behind the entry door.

"Sally!" shouted Miss Nibbs, as she rocked out of her chair, "and so she may. I guess she won't show you much sympathy though."



Miss Nibbs left the Briggs Home.

A few moments passed and Miss Nibbs was seen with carpet bag in hand, headed for her home, and the house left without a woman's voice or work. The boys, having a very good understanding of culinary affairs, had a meal prepared for their father and the chores all done when he reached home in the early evening. Their account of the departure of Miss Nibbs seemed to move Mr. Briggs but little, for he was a cool, self-possessed man, of few words and decided action.

The way Sally Pendleton happened to go to Boston with Mr. Briggs was this, although she may have had other intentions; but Mr. Briggs was strongly fortified against all designs of a serious nature. That he was going to drive to Boston was known by the Pendletons, and Sally made bold to ask for the privilege

of riding with him, which he could not very well refuse after all they had done for him during the illness of Mrs. Briggs. That she rode down and back was all the story. Mr. Briggs was well pleased, on entering the house, to find that his two boys had assumed the charge of affairs. As soon as tea was over, he sent George to the Nibbs house with the portion of a week's pay that was due Miss Hannah, and also his sincere gratitude for all her sympathy had prompted her to do for him and his family.

"With the youthful housekeepers in charge, I will leave the Briggs family for the present and tell you more of them some other time, said grandma," in closing her story for the evening.

FIFTH EVENING.

AS you, and the young people generally, know but little about the good times we had when we were young, I will try to give you a little account of social life among us. There were "Tea Drinkings," which were invited parties; but as a general thing we felt free to start out and spend the day with a neighbor without any invitation or notice. Then there were the "Quiltings," of which I have given you an idea; the "Applebees" and "Huskings," which were harvest gatherings when the gentlemen went; the "Wood-Cuttings," when the young men gathered at the village pastor's and cut up dozens of cords of wood, hauled by parishioners as a part of his annual salary. The latter were anticipated with a deal of pleasure, for quantities of doughnuts were prepared to go with the cider for lunch. The sociability of the occasion more than balanced the labor. We

always had a plenty of good ham of our own curing that we could cut a slice from at any time, and our good home-made sausages we packed in meal and kept until far into the summer; and as for butter and cheese, we made these ourselves, and so felt it was good enough for any one who might drop in to spend the day; so we were always prepared and felt at ease when company came.

The Nibbs sisters had a "Tea Drinking," an invited party, in honor of the engagement of one of them to a "spruce young man from Boston." He had kept the school the winter before, and in his boarding around, as was the custom, had taken a fancy to Hannah's youngest sister, and this party was the occasion when the engagement was made known, although Hannah had not failed to previously hint at the matter. "Mother Nibbs," as she was familiarly known, had on her best mourning cap, with broad strings flying at either side, and was located in her chair in the corner. Her hands kept up a continual struggle over the blue sock that she was knitting, only halting to take a pinch of snuff and replace her needle in the cob that she had fastened to her right side by the string of her apron, this being her arrangement, "sheath," as she called it, for fastening her work.

"The gals are doing the whole thing this time, going to show what they know, I guess. I have tried to have them capable. They say I must sit here. Well, I don't care, I should like a little time to rest and meditate," said Mrs. Nibbs, while indulging in another pinch of snuff. "It's high time the gals was trying their hand at things, for 'Becca is going to be married, you know. Lor', of course you know it, for that's what this great fuss is all about. I

don't suppose they want me to say anything about it though; but they needn't think I'm going to sit perched up here and hold my tongue," continued Mrs. Nibbs; "that hain't been my habit all my life, you know."

By this time Hannah, who had been evidently enjoying a fit of the sulks, appeared from another room, and at once entered into conversation, all the time turning a look that half betrayed her feelings to Dolly Sprague, who had arrived among the first of the party. Now, Dolly, like a good, faithful daughter of a pious deacon, entertained no unkind feelings towards Hannah, although she knew very well that her good humor was not reciprocated. While we should expect that Hannah would welcome each in the room before seating herself, we must overlook this lack of courtesy in her, by remembering that she was not a little disturbed in her feelings at present, and did not entertain the kindest regard for Dolly, any more than she did for Sally Pendleton. To shake hands with all but Miss Sprague would be too much of a display of feelings; so she slyly located herself, apparently unnoticed by many who were busy in conversation.

At this point, Mother Nibbs shouted,—being deaf she could not properly pitch her voice,—“Becca, where on earth are Sally and Priscilla Pendleton. Didn't you ask them? Of course you did.”

The efforts of Rebecca to quietly suppress her mother were of no avail, for she would finish her remark and then settled quietly down in meditation, as she called it. Hannah, whose face indicated a rush of blood to her head, exclaimed, “I guess they think they have other business to attend to; most

likely they are making Sally's wedding fixings. I suppose she bought them when she went to Boston with Mr. Briggs."

With this remark from Hannah, the drift of conversation was entirely changed, and centred, as you must suppose, on the subject — the marriage of Sally Pendleton.

"What's that you say, Hannah?" exclaimed Mother Nibbs, "Sally Pendleton going to be married; to who, do tell?"

Hannah's face revealed the whole story, and it was useless for her to try to conceal anything in regard to her sudden departure from the Briggs family, while it had thus far been the general impression that Mr. Briggs was practising economy.

"Why, can't they get along alone until haying?" said one. Such was the general understanding of the change until this moment, when Hannah's words and actions quite plainly revealed that her unexpected removal was not of a very pleasant nature.

"Is it Mr. Briggs?" voiced the senior Nibbs. "I'll warrant it, and that's what started our Hannah off. I know well enough. Hannah, why didn't you tell us when you came home, instead of laying it to the boys, and saying you had no more sympathy for them?"

Here Dolly Sprague, realizing the peculiar situation of Hannah, turned the conversation by remarking, "It was a familiar saying of my mother, 'That the chaff always goes before the wheat,' and I think we must come to the conclusion, from what we have learned this afternoon, that Sally is the wheat."

"And you mean to insinuate that I am the chaff, Dolly Sprague, do you?" said Hannah.

"Not at all," was the pleasant reply of Miss Sprague, whose face apparently indicated her regret at having so innocently wounded her neighbor's feelings, who was not very friendly towards her and had not been for some months. "I was about to say that I presume Mr. Briggs feels so lonely that he is going to try to fill Lucy's place. I can't blame him; I thought the family very fortunate in securing the services of Miss Nibbs, who is so efficient in a household. I didn't know you had resigned your position until Mrs. Johnson just told me."

"Yes," replied Hannah, in a tone somewhat subdued; "I left there some weeks since, and I had a good reason for it too. Sally came down and coaxed Mr. Briggs to take her to Boston; I don't know for what, yet I have my opinion, and after all I have done for Mr. Briggs and those motherless boys in their affliction, I thought it rather unkind treatment; and so I left, and Sally can go there and keep house. I guess things won't be as tidy as they were when I left, if she does the work. I don't know but that's what's keeping them this afternoon, for 'Becca says she asked them. I didn't have anything to do about it; this is 'Becca's party. If she'd asked me to help her, I would have snubbed them for once anyhow."

Here the subject was dropped, for Sally and Priscilla Pendleton came in apparent haste around the corner, and were greeted by 'Becca, who had not imbibed any of Hannah's feelings towards them. Their apology revealed the fact that their father had been taken ill, and they came, very reluctantly, after much urging from their mother, who felt sure the attack was not serious.

On learning this bit of news, Hannah, beckoned to

Mrs. Johnson, who followed her into the well-room, as they called a side apartment, and there poured forth another of her impassioned speeches.

"What if Mr. Pendleton should die? but he is so tough and contrary that he will stand it one while, I guess; but of course they would like him out of the way. How I would like to get into that room. If he should die, wouldn't Seth, Saul and the gals have a good lot of funds! I don't believe but that's what Mr. Briggs is thinking of. Well, if he gets Sally and a heap of money, he won't fill Lucy's place. What a good woman s was!"

A call from Miss Rebecca to tea broke up the little groups and discussions, and all hands were soon seated at the table, which Rebecca had spread with all the nice things that she could prepare; but the good time was suddenly disturbed by Saul, who came running at full speed for his sisters and exclaimed, "Dad's awful bad; I guess he'll go this time."



Home of Deacon Sprague.

After the "girls" had gone, the conversation naturally turned to the prospects of a change at the Pendleton home. Sympathy, mingled with indignation, was freely expressed, when Dolly Sprague, in her characteristic good spirit, feelingly said, "Let the result be what it may, it is God's doings, and although it may be marvellous in our eyes, it is right."

Dolly was familiar with the Scriptures, and was never at a loss to find a passage to meet any emergency, although she would not always give the exact wording. Mother Nibbs had by this time succeeded in learning the cause of the sudden departure of the Pendletons, and gave expression to thoughts which many, less inclined to talk, would have suppressed.

"I do wonder if Parson Whitford has been sent for. I should think it would be awful for Mr. Pendleton to die just as he is. Who will dare to go into that room? Poor old man! how he will hate to leave that key, and them children are so ignorant; and if they get a lot of money they won't know how to spend it. But there is Mr. Briggs, and they all think he is perfect. I suppose he can settle the matter for them; and if he marries Sally, as Hannah says he is going to, the whole affair will work well."

This soliloquy of Mother Nibbs was not fully appreciated by the guests, as it was directed to no one in particular and interspersed with sips of the tea and several pinches of snuff, for when Mrs. Nibbs was excited, she used her solace most freely, even at her meals.

Comments on the superiority of quince preserve and "lection cake," were freely made, and the peculiar fitness of Rebecca for the wife of a school-master was hinted at by Mrs. Johnson, and received the

assent of the whole party. This school master was one of the many who had met with a rebuff at the Pendleton's when seeking the affection of Priscilla, but had received a welcome at the Nibbs home from the very flower of the family, Miss Rebecca, or 'Becca, as she was called more familiarly. She was a very different person from her older sister, partaking more of the nature of her father, who had recently died, than of her mother, who, notwithstanding her peculiarities, was a good, kind woman, and a faithful friend and neighbor.

SIXTH EVENING.

IT was a cold spring day, one of those chilly days of May, when a fire is as needful for comfort as in mid-winter, that a company of the farmers had congregated in Larkin's shop and were having a good chat, such as the people of an old-fashioned town heartily enjoy when the weather does not admit of out-door work. Several of the company were of the group who happened to be present when Seth Pendleton got the taps put on his only brogans. A new associate was a round-faced man who was busy at his post of duty; he was closely shaven, save a few gray bristles on his neck, suggestive of stray brush about the stone wall of a barren pasture, while a huge wart on one cheek, with another somewhat smaller nestling by the side of his Roman nose, reminded one of the boulders so common on neg-

lected grounds. Isaac Fuller, better known as Ike Fuller, was standing by and seemed to be the chief speaker of the hour. He was six feet tall, with a great display of jewelry upon his clothes; he seemed to be discoursing upon the merits of a pair of steers which he had lately purchased. Fuller was something of a cattle trader, by the way, and thought no one was such a good judge of live stock of all kinds as he. Mr. Larkin himself had as keen appreciation of fun as any one and loved to help it on; but, at the same time, would preserve a countenance that would lead one to suppose his mind was fully engrossed with his work; his bench being so located that his back was to the bystanders, his interest in the conversation was not noticed. His son Lewis was of a mirthful turn, much like the father, only he was quite small and slender in his frame. The company were all giving close heed to the remarks of Fuller, when the door opened and Hanson Page entered with whip in hand. Page was a rough fellow and found his greatest delight in tormenting any one who came under his sway. You will remember that it was Hanson Page who met Seth Pendleton on that day when he had been to Larkin's shop to have his shoes repaired, in preparation for the singing school. After a "How are you?" all round, Page and Fuller had the floor, the one flourishing his ox whip and the other making a great display of his watch chains and seal rings.

"They say," shouted Page, "that things don't go on so fine at the Simpson farm after all. That temperance pledge that Deacon Jones got Seth to sign don't amount to much, and he gets right out and out drunk so soon."

"Just as I expected," replied Fuller, while the round-faced man paused in his pegging and said, "Perhaps you are misinformed."

"No I am not," said Page, "for I got it from Hannah Nibbs as I came up. I stopped there to get some purple topped turnip seed to sow among my potatoes. I knew Mr. Nibbs always raised it, and I thought he might have left some that they would not use. Hannah seems to be full of sympathy for Seth's wife who has been so taken in."

"Sure enough; no doubt of that," said the round-faced man, giving the nose wart a slight twist. "It is a fact, Hannah did feel bad about that Simpson farm, and I guess she would have liked to try her hand there, but she didn't succeed, and now her sympathetic disposition has found another object on which to fasten itself. I wonder if she would like to have it known generally why she left Mr. Briggs' employ?"

Here Fuller broke in by saying, "That's you, Spencer," addressing the round-faced man. "You will defend any one that belongs to that temperance society, and won't believe anything against them, no matter who tells it. I think Hannah Nibbs is a truthful woman, and I believe Seth has gone to drinking again; perhaps not enough to hurt him though," beginning to be a little ashamed in the presence of Mr. Spencer.

"If such is the case," replied Mr. Spencer, "I think he may be reclaimed, and that's a part of our work, and I for one shan't give him up."

"If old Pendleton dies and Seth and Saul get the inside of that room, I just bet they will be drunk half of their time," said Page.

Here Larkin whirled on his stool and said, inquiringly, "Is Mr. Pendleton sick?"

"Yes," said Page. Hannah tells me that the gals were at 'Becca's party yesterday and had to go home before tea, for the old man was taken with a bad spell, and I met Parson Whitford headed that way as I came up. I guess he has got a hard fellow to contend with in Hezekiah Pendleton, if he hopes to prepare him for death; he has been housed up in that room too many years to repent now."

Here Mr. Spencer interrupted by saying, "All things are possible with God, and it is not Mr. Whitford who can prepare him, but the Spirit of God. Mr. Whitford may be able to direct his restless soul; but it has been so imbedded in this world's goods, that it will cling tight in death, I fear."

"Right here, my boy," said grandma, "let me impress upon you the worthlessness of all earthly gains and possessions when one comes to face death; if he has lived a good, useful life and done as he would be done by in all things, trusting in Christ for salvation, he won't fear in such an hour. I hope, my child, that the folly of Mr. Pendleton will aid you in so planning your life and conducting yourself, that when the summons comes, let it be in youth, middle life or old age, you can welcome it and go in peace and leave a good name behind you in the world. Such a legacy is a good deal more valuable than gold and is worth thinking of. Riches are of but little account in the last hours of one's life, but treasures that are laid up in Heaven abide and avail for us then."

You will see that Mr. Spencer was a good man in word and his whole life was after that type. He was not ready to believe evil reports of any one, and as such a person, he was an influence for good in this community; but I can't say as much for Fuller and Page, yet I think that Hannah Nibbs had a good

heart, but she was quite advanced in life when she was introduced to you. Her early hopes had been blighted and she saw no bright prospects for the future, which explained, I think, why she conducted herself so strangely at times and talked so unreasonably on some subjects.

The opening clouds caused a breaking up of the meeting at Larkin's and the gossips disappeared, greatly to the relief of Mr. Larkin and Mr. Spencer. Hanson Page, while on his way home, stopped at Mr. Briggs' to inquire after the Pendletons, and also to see why Hannah had gone from his employ, for Aunt Hepsy, his wife, always wanted to know the news, and being somewhat lame, she could not get out much herself, so a budget of news was quite a relief to her. Mr. Briggs had no taste for gossip, and it was but little of that kind of conversation that he could be drawn into; yet Page drove his steers to the garden wall and went in and found Mr. Briggs sitting by the fire, while Dolly Sprague was near by busily engaged. Both seemed to be looking over various articles of wearing apparel unfamiliar to this rough man.

After comments on the weather and inquiring after Mr. Pendleton, Page started on with his steers, much to the relief of Mr. Briggs and Miss Sprague.

Dolly had come over the hill from her father's reluctantly, to aid Mr. Briggs in securing various articles of clothing that were being damaged by moths; but Hanson Page saw it in another light, and on reaching home made haste to tell Hepsy, his wife, and so the story started that Mr. Briggs was soon to take Dolly Sprague over the hill to fill the vacancy in his home and the void in his heart. Whether there were any such intentions at the time of this visit on the part



“Page drove his steers to the garden yall.”

of either, I do not know, but it was not many months before it became apparent to all that this rumor was well founded, and just before haying time of the following year, the dwelling of Deacon Sprague was alive with people, for there was to be a double marriage on that day. Mr. Briggs was to take Dolly away, and Jabez, Dolly's brother, was to bring a wife home, where he was to locate, and, with the aid of the youthful Mrs. Sprague, to care for his father in the absence of Dolly, who would preside as Mrs. Briggs at the end of the lane leading from Deacon Sprague's to Mr. Briggs' home.

Hannah Nibbs felt better about this and was sorry that she was so hasty in leaving her situation. Mr. Briggs and the boys had got along during those

months quite well, and had enjoyed themselves far better than if Miss Nibbs in her unhappy frame of mind had remained. Hannah was so in the habit of talking that she could not refrain from making a remark once in a while, and she would occasionally say, when in the company of those who would understand the full import of her sarcasm, "So Mr. Briggs has got the Sprague wheat," but it can be said to her credit, that she seemed to lose some of the vindictive spirit that had controlled her, and she settled down to care for her mother who was now becoming quite old and feeble.

Dolly Sprague had always been known by the Pendletons and they seemed to take her right into their confidence as they had her predecessor, and Mr. and Mrs. Briggs were now their chief advisers, as in earlier years Mr. Briggs, with his wife Lucy, had been. Sally Pendleton seemed a little disturbed at first, but it was soon over, for Miss Nibbs had not become the companion of her friend, and things went on with the old-time peace and good cheer. The Briggs boys welcomed the new mother as real gentlemen, and found in her a mother's heart, and one who, by her mild, gentle manner and Christian principles, deserved to be called mother.

"My child, I would have you know that the true Christian man or woman is better fitted to fill any position of responsibility than one who has no decided Christian principles. The position assumed by Mrs. Briggs was not an easy one. Two boys, who well remembered their mother, were ready to detect seeming faults in the one who came to take the mother's place. Yet they soon learned that she was trying to be a true mother to them, and they grew up to honor her and be honored by her. I may add that good relatives, outside the home, made this position more easy to fill than if they had

taken the opposite and more common course ; and much is due to these young men, who did their part most faithfully ; and now they are useful, honored men of business and trust in the world, having gone from that home with a realizing sense of the importance of Christian principles exemplified in their step-mother.

SEVENTH EVENING.

MR. PENDLETON lived some years after the party at the Nibbs', but, sad to say, he did not profit by his illness that so excited the family and others. As soon as he was able to get to his room, he crawled up those dilapidated stairs and continued to rule his family with the same tyrannical force ; his anxiety for a better preparation for the future life was all over when assured that death had loosed its grip, but the time came when it was perfectly apparent that his strength was waning not to revive again ; and early one autumn morning, when the grass was still crisp with the frost of the night, Saul Pendleton entered the home of Mr. Briggs hastily and said, "Dr. Preston says Dad is going this time and can't live long. I don't believe he will ever git off his bed again, and Sally and Priscilla want me to git the key from him and git into that old room and see what he has got there before he dies. You know that Seth got that Simpson farm right away from us, and Hanson Page tells us to git the start of him now and look out for ourselves and come up to him in

some way, so the gals have sent me down to see what you think of it."

Mr. Briggs did not approve of the course of Mr. Pendleton in regard to the Simpson farm after he learned that Saul and the girls did not have anything in way of an offset; but he could not indorse the plan that Hanson Page had advised, and in reply to Saul's question said, "Now that you have come to me for advice on this matter, I will give it, for I think it is a very serious question. I think you had better do nothing of the kind. Your father has kept that room sacred to his own use for twenty years, and no one has stepped into it but himself; now let his last days and hours be undisturbed, and don't meddle with the room or the key."

"Oh, he has got the key tied by a leather string about his neck, and there is no way to git it while he knows anything, but to cut the string and take it in spite of him," said Saul.

"No, Saul, I would never trouble him about it, but let him die in peace as far as you are concerned," repeated Mr. Briggs with a shake of his head.

Saul, who was reluctant to abandon his plan to get into that room, and by the aid of the girls to secure something to balance the Simpson farm, was hard to be convinced that he must not do it, yet at last concluded to go home and abide by the advice of the ever faithful Mr. Briggs. Saul had no sooner reached home than Sally made her appearance at the Briggs house in a business-like manner and sought advice on a different subject.

"Now," said she, "Saul has told you that father won't live long, but a few days at the longest, and we want to git ready for the funeral. We must have a

good black gown each of us, and it ought to be made right off, for there will be no time after father is dead. We have no money on hand to git the cloth with, and we want to know if you will let us have the money until we can pay it back to you, and if you," turning to Mrs. Briggs, "will go to Boston and get the goods." On being assured that all these requests would be granted, Sally continued, "I think you had better git a good lot of crape for our bonnets too. Git enough for mother, Priscilla and me. We ain't going to do as Hepsy Page did, when her mother died, go all about the town and borrow everything she wanted, not a bit of that. You'll git your pay one of these days, no matter whether Seth likes it or not. Just let us git hold of that key and we will show him who had the Simpson farm. I am going right over to see if Hannah Nibbs will come and make our gowns just as soon as you git the goods; and will you go to-day?"

Leaving Mr. and Mrs. Briggs to consider the matter, Sally started off to see Hannah and engage her to come to do the work; returning in a very short time, she stopped to report her success. Hannah was only too willing to make the engagement, being not a little impelled by her curiosity. Mr. Briggs had consented to drive with his wife to Boston on the following day, which was the best he could do, and by some persuasion convinced Sally that there would be sufficient time to prepare for the funeral if they did not go for some days; but such a delay could not be considered for a moment by the anxious visitor, while she believed, after Mr. Briggs' talk with her, that her father would last some time, yet said she always liked to have things on hand.

As soon as it was convenient for Miss Nibbs to leave home, she started out among the neighbors "to learn the most suitable way for making the gowns," she said; but it was very plain that she was so delighted with the prospect of being at the Pendletons when the father should die, that she could not control herself; in fact, the hours dragged heavily and she expressed much fear that his end would come before the gowns were done. Hannah had not been very cordial to Mrs. Briggs and had not called upon her since she became the occupant of their neighbor's home; but she did say to Mrs. Johnson this afternoon that she was glad Dolly was going to select the goods as she had excellent taste. She felt so happy over the prospect of being at the Pendletons, that she had a pleasant word for every one and but a little fault to find with any. It was perfectly evident that she hoped to be present when the forbidden door should be opened that she might get a look into the mysterious room.

Mr. and Mrs. Briggs, good as their word, started for Boston as early in the following day as the duties of the farm would permit, and purchased all the necessary articles, and the succeeding morning found Miss Nibbs seated in a narrow room across the dingy entry from the larger room, where the little russet-faced man lay curled up in bed, hugging his key and fighting the grim messenger that was hovering over the dwelling and would not be turned away until the work was done.

"My child," said grandma, "had their father done his duty by these children, they would have been spending their time in providing for his little wants in his last hours, instead of making preparations for a fine appearance after his death, for

it is plain to be seen that the only evidence of mourning was to be their dress. I do not mean that they neglected the aged parent in his last hours, but their mind was not fully on him as is generally the case when a parent is sinking away."

The ever-faithful pastor called in the afternoon and tried to talk with the sinking man, but it was too late. If the fourscore and fourteen years of his life had not furnished hours for his preparation of soul, these last days did not, and his hearing was so impaired that he could not follow the good friend when pleading at the Throne of Grace for him, so he interrupted the prayer by crying out, "I want a drink so, I'm most choked."

This rather hastened the Christian friend and pastor, who, with "amen" and a kindly word for the family, left the house for the last time while Hezekiah Pendleton lived.

Seth was the oldest of the Pendleton children, and Hanson Page had driven around by his house and convinced him that it was his privilege to take the command of things at his father's, now the aged parent had become so weak that he could no longer rule. So he left his wife Patty in charge at the Simpson farm, for it was still known by that name long after Seth Pendleton became the possessor, and went over to the homestead and began to assert his rights according to the directions of Hanson Page. Seth was in the house when Mr. Whitford was there, but kept quiet until the good minister was well down the hill on his way home.

"I think it was fortunate that Mr. Pendleton was deaf and that his eyesight was so dim that he did not realize anything of the scene that took place in his own room, but a little while before his spirit left the body. It was very differ-

ent from that which you witnessed when your grandfather passed away. You well remember how we administered to his wants because of our love for him, which his good, generous life had called forth from us. When we saw that life was gone, you remember, we all felt that his example was one that we ought to try to follow; but when poor Hezekiah Pendleton passed away, no one could say that his life had been such as to furnish an example for good, or regarded his memory precious for any acts of kindness that he had performed of late years, although in his early days he was a different man, for those characteristics that were so strong in his last years had gradually grown upon him. Surely those last hours furnished a scene that I hope will never be repeated, and probably would never have been known to the world, had it not been for Hannah Nibbs, whose curiosity prompted her to divide her attention between the mourning gowns and the sick room, making her desire to have a 'good fit' a most plausible excuse for intruding on the family as they stood about the aged father in the last hours of his life."

The good old mother sat trembling with emotion, no doubt forgetting the scores of years that were now closing, and recalling the early days of her married life, when they had less wealth and more real comfort. At such times, great faults are overshadowed by the virtues of earlier days, that is, in the minds of those who have known them in both, as, when we are passing through a severe storm, we recall with much pleasure the bright sunny days that have preceded it. Seth, with his broad shoulders, hard fists, unshaven face and bloated countenance, for his habits had begun to tell upon him already, sat at one side of the bed, and Saul had equally as prominent a place on the opposite side, while the two girls, for such they were always called, until they left the old home, were near at hand; each of the four was anxious for the end of the father's life, but the latter three were quietly planning in their own minds some

way "to come up" with Seth, and make sure of a share to balance the Simpson farm.

"I want you all to understand," said Seth, "that I am the oldest, and I am going to manage things here when father is done with them, and that will be pretty soon too, by the appearances now," stooping over the bed to see if breath still lingered in the aged parent. "I shall take that key as soon as he is dead, and I'll see what is in that room in spite of you."

The good mother, who had been kept down so long, did not once think that she had any right to a voice in the matter, hence said nothing and only feared the scene that would follow the death of her husband. At this point a voice from the lower room checked the conversation. Not one of the children of the old couple being willing to trust the others in the room during their absence, Hannah was called to go and see who was there and attend to his wants. It was Ike Fuller, who, on learning the state of affairs, did not wait to be asked, but pushed his way to the sick room, exclaiming as soon as entering, "Wall, wall, the old gent is about gone and you will soon have matters in your own hands, mother," turning to Mrs. Pendleton and addressing her familiarly, as was his custom, for he was not an infrequent visitor to the Pendleton home.

"What's that?" shouted Seth, "I'm the oldest and I guess I shall manage affairs myself."

"Tut, tut," said Ike; "it's your mother's privilege to say who shall attend to matters if she is not able to do it, and of course she is not."

Here the good woman took courage and said, "I will send for Mr. Briggs," and addressing Mr. Fuller

said, "Will you go right down for him and tell him father is about gone and that I want him to come right up here?"

Ike was soon off, rather glad to be able to do the errand, in hopes to be asked to return, and possibly to get a look into that room.

Mr. Briggs was soon at the Pendletons and Ike Fuller with him. The good old lady had seemed to change in her appearance in the very few moments that had elapsed since being told that she had some rights, and she quietly withdrew to another room with Mr. Briggs, to tell him the condition of things; while the four ignorant, avaricious children of the aged couple stood watching the father and each other.

The sewing room of Hannah Nibbs was so located that she could hear the conversation from both parties, and, according to her story, the change that came over Mrs. Pendleton was wonderful when she realized that it was her right to speak and exercise a little authority. Before Mr. Briggs left the house, it was wisely agreed that everything should be put in his charge, but that the key should not be touched even by him, until death had done its work. On directing Ike Fuller to stay until he returned, Mr. Briggs went home to arrange his private business so that he could devote most of the immediate future to the new responsibilities which he had reluctantly taken.

While watching with the sinking man and the family, Fuller made good use of the time by displaying the merits of his jewelry and telling wonderful things of his brindled steers. Strange subjects for such an hour, you say, so did Miss Nibbs; but you

must remember that Fuller was a rough, unprincipled man, was always ready for a trade, and had an eye to some of the money that was soon to leave the grasp of Mr. Pendleton and start into circulation. His bogus watch and chain, with those flashing seal rings, looked fine to Saul and Priscilla, who silently declared they would have some of that sort one of these days.

While Ike Fuller was talking with Page, who had dropped in, the aged father passed away, and when Mr. Briggs returned, hastened by Hannah's call, there sat Mother Pendleton, Seth, Saul, Sally and Priscilla around the bed, on which lay the lifeless form of husband, father, miser. Fuller and Page were abashed in the presence of death, and stood in the rear.



The Miser's Death Bed.

Mr. Briggs, with his characteristic dignity, stepped forward and said, "According to your agreement, in

your presence and in the presence of Isaac Fuller, Hanson Page, and Hannah Nibbs," who, with an unfinished garment in hand stood in the doorway, "I take possession of this key," cutting the string that held it to the poor, emaciated form, and formally placing it in his breast-pocket.

A life of ninety-four years had closed with but few regrets, save that the influence of this long life could not be more helpful to the community in which it had been spent.

EIGHTH EVENING.

IT required some time for the Pendleton sons and daughters to realize that they had given up their power to Mr. Briggs before they had a right to exercise it in reality; but the good mother manifested no desire to assume any responsibility whatever, and in fact her children had implicit confidence in Mr. Briggs, and he would have succeeded in doing what he felt was his duty, with but little opposition, only that Hanson Page and some others filled them with ideas that were prompted by feelings of jealousy. Many of the townfolks had a great longing to fill the position which Mr. Briggs was to occupy.

Ike Fuller's desire to work off some of his jewelry led him to make too many calls on the younger Pendletons for their good; in fact, he did not hesitate to make his flattering offers before the burial of the father, and Page's steers did tempt Saul. While

these pretended friends, but mischief makers in reality, were filling the heads of the girls and Saul, Mr. Briggs was making preparations for the funeral.

Squire Taylor, as he was commonly known, being a Justice of the Peace and a carpenter by trade, was making the coffin, and Hannah Nibbs was gathering the folds in some dark brown calico for the last garment, and hastening to finish off the gowns that were now actually needed. The people of the little town had generally learned that Mr. Pendleton was dead, for the bell in the old church belfry that stood apart from the meeting house had for five minutes slowly pealed forth its measured notes, proclaiming to all that a death had taken place, and warning them to be ready to count. After a pause of two minutes the rapid strokes of the bell-man counted up to ninety-four, which convinced all that Hezekiah Pendleton had gone, for he was the oldest citizen in the village.

Bridge Potter, brother to Patty, happened to drop into Taylor's shop, and finding Ike Fuller there, stopped to inquire into the particulars of the last hours of Mr. Pendleton, and see Squire Taylor put the staining on the surface of the rude pine coffin that was about completed.

"Pendleton can have that room all to himself, and there is no need of a lock to it either," said Bridge thoughtlessly, pointing to the coffin, that was just receiving the finishing touches by the Squire.

"Sure enough," replied Fuller; "and I guess he'd be glad to have a chance to let in a little air, for I reckon he'll want all the breeze there is where he's gone."

"These were unkind remarks indeed, my boy, as you well know, and no kind-hearted, thoughtful person would talk in

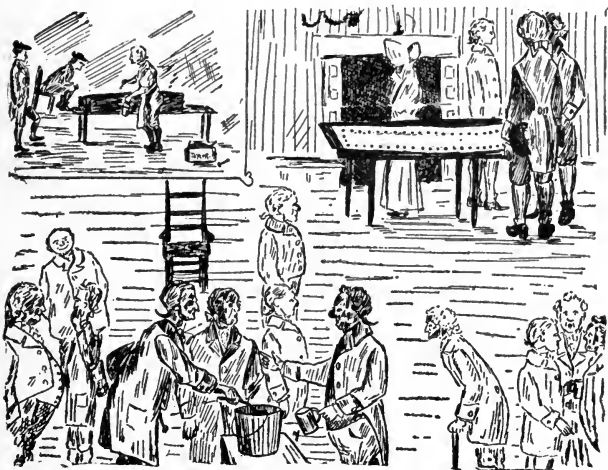
that way ; but Potter and Fuller were rough, and thoughtless of the feelings of others, and the life of Mr. Pendleton had been such that the best of people had but little reason to express sympathy for the family or to respect the memory of the dead."

Seth, who was feared by his brother and sisters, went home soon after Mr. Briggs took the key, and, unfortunately, indulged his appetite too freely, and being under the influence of liquor, did not appear at the old home until the day of the funeral ; and it was to be regretted that he came then, for, knowing that Mr. Briggs was one of the active members of the temperance society, he believed he would not provide the complement of liquors for the funeral, and being determined "that father should have a good send-off," he came on with a supply of punch all ready made, and had Ike Fuller, Hanson Page, Bridge Potter, and some others, who gathered early in the afternoon of the funeral day, well filled before Mr. Briggs found it out ; who, when he did learn of the state of affairs, remonstrated with Seth ; but on finding him determined, gave up and let him have his own way, rather than have a scene of discord, just as the town-folks were gathering. The girls had proposed that black gloves be furnished for all the mourners, having seen this done in some families of note ; but Saul did not favor it, as none but home-made mittens had ever been on his bony hands, and "What is good enough for me is good enough for any one who will come here," said Saul, with a veto of emphasis.

Mr. Briggs had no such ideas and readily acceded to the desire of Saul, and gloves were not furnished. Just before the company were seated in the best room for the services, Seth called the neighbors who had

been selected for bearers out one side, and gave them another round of punch, saying, "Drink hearty, for you've got a long tramp to the yard. To be sure, the old gent don't weigh much, yet you'll need it." But five of the eight responded to his call. Three of them had joined the temperance society, and believed it was incumbent upon them to keep the pledge even on such an occasion as this.

"The customs in the days of the Pendletons were very unlike those of the present, so the proceedings of Seth were not looked upon as they would be now. There was no such thing as a hearse in which to carry the dead, and at times the coffin was borne on the shoulders of four men. In later years they had a frame, called a bier, with four handles to it on which the coffin was placed and carried to the grave much more easily. Eight bearers were selected, so as to give an opportunity for rest to four, without delaying the procession."



1. Squire Taylor made the Coffin.
2. The Funeral of Hezekiah Pendleton.

As the yard was quite a long distance from the Pendleton home, the full number was very necessary at the burial of Mr. Pendleton. Miss Nibbs was selected as the general directress of affairs in the house, with the exception of what Seth would attend to. Priscilla, who was very particular about the appearance of the rooms, came into the living apartment just before Mr. Whitford began the reading of the Scriptures and gave her last orders to Hannah. Her coarse voice was heard through all the rooms, as the silence that is customary in the presence of death had taken possession. "Miss Nibbs, if you see any ants on the dresser, you brush them off."

It is needless to say that some people were inclined to smile at these directions of Priscilla, regardless of the hour and the occasion.

The service being over, many stood about in a circle, while Ike Fuller brought in a pailful of toddy and passed it around, greatly to the disgust of many, but to the pleasure of others, who quietly said, "Seth is doing it up in good shape." It was noticed that Hanson Page changed his position during the passing of the drink and so located himself as to have a second opportunity, and he showed its effects before he reached the grave.

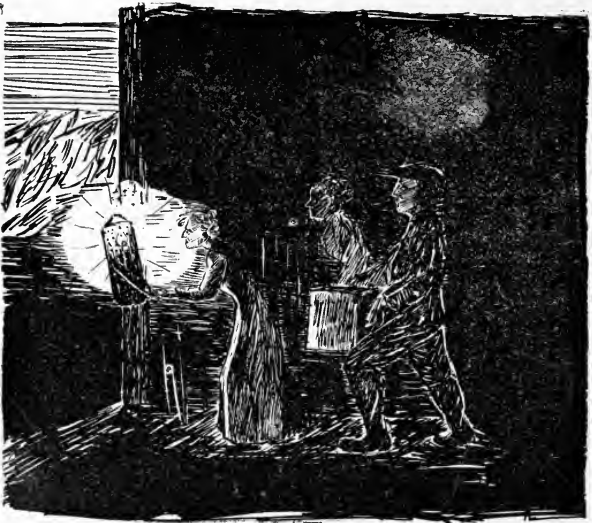
Rev. Mr. Whitford took Mrs. Pendleton into his chaise and followed immediately behind the bearers and the body. The other members of the family walked to the grave, as horses were not very numerous and carriages were hardly known; only the minister and doctor, with a few wealthy people, had them. Mr. Briggs and Hannah Nibbs remained at the house. Hannah was to prepare tea for the family

and neighbors who had been asked in to eat with the mourners on their return from the grave.

Before sunset, Seth was carried home, worse from the effects of his liquors, and before all the people had retired. Mr. Briggs, knowing that Seth was located for the night, and fearing nothing from the other members of the family, decided to go home, and Hannah Nibbs also left the house. The family were alone, a sad time generally in a home that has been visited by death; but sorrow did not enter here, only as the heart of the good old mother was pained, as she recalled the years of her early married life, when her husband was considerate of her feelings, and when they labored and planned together to provide for the wants of their growing family. Could one have looked in upon them in the early hour of darkness, he would have seen Saul and the sisters skulking about the house by the light of a dim candle. What were they doing, do you ask?

"We'll pay Seth for getting the Simpson farm away from Dad in that way," whispered Saul, fearing Mother might be disturbed; and knowing she would not countenance anything of the kind, they did not want her to appear. Had one have been outside the house an hour later, he would have seen, by the light of the stars that twinkled in the crisp atmosphere of that November night, three tall figures start from the back door of the house, come around to the front by a circuitous path, cross the highway and pass on into the cattle yard and disappear from view. One, apparently in female attire, seemed to lead the way, having in hand a tin frame punctured with small holes, through which the flickering rays of a lighted candle dimly shone, but aided in seeing the outline of the

other two figures, one of which seemed to be bending over a heavy burden, while the other carried what appeared to be a frame of some kind in one hand and a spade in the other. Their shadows, cast by the dim light, revealed their stealthy movements.



The Night after the Funeral.

NINTH EVENING.

THE legal steps having been taken, Mr. Briggs took full possession of the Pendleton property, and at an early date commenced to settle according to law. There was no will. Hezekiah Pendleton had such a firm grasp on life that he never allowed himself to think of death; and if he had, I doubt if he could have brought his mind to the point where he would have been willing to put on paper the words, "I give," for they were unknown to his vocabulary since Seth got the Simpson farm; but "I keep" were words that filled all the space.

"My child, I hope you fully realize the misfortune that befalls any one who forms such a penurious habit as did Mr. Pendleton. I would not have you unmindful of the future and fail to prepare for old age, but guard against a miserly propensity."

A few days after the funeral Mr. Briggs appeared early in the morning with three men, he having spent the greater part of each day there since the funeral. They were Jones and Taylor, both Justices of the Peace, and Mr. Larkin, who were to take an inventory of the property. Mr. Briggs was careful to guard against any opportunity for the many jealous people of the village to charge him with appropriating anything to his personal use, so he decided not to enter that room alone, and he had not touched the lock since he took the key from its dead owner, and was quite sure no one had, and believing no one could find any other entrance to the den, he felt perfectly safe in waiting until the appraisers were duly sworn, before he touched the door which had swung

open for no one but Hezekiah Pendleton for twenty years. They waited for Seth, that every member of the family might be present when the old rusty key was turned. They did not wait long; Seth soon came puffing in at a rapid pace, and up the back stairs they went. Mr. Briggs turned the key and swung open the door. The squeak of the old rusty hinges, that had sent a shudder through each member of the family for years, had now turned to melody and sent a thrill of joy through every one of them. A little window of diamond shaped glass set in lead, opening out upon the roof of a shed at the rear, was the only means of obtaining light, and this being partly screened by a board resting against it, allowed but a very dim light to enter the room. The screen being removed, and the eyes of each of the explorers, for such they might well be called, becoming accustomed to the conditions, there was but little difficulty in viewing the surroundings. The room was about ten feet wide and a little longer; quite low studded, with the rafters all visible. It was entirely unfinished. The old beams and braces were perforated by the worms of years, but as it was the contents that interested the appraisers, administrator and heirs, as well as Hannah and all the townfolks, so that is what is of the most interest to you.

This room was none other than the temple which contained Hezekiah Pendleton's god. Here was what he had worked for; that for which he had denied his wife and children the comforts, yes, necessities of life; and what had afforded him no comfort in the hour of death. Yet it was his god.

"What do I mean? Why, my child, I mean that any thing or person that is worshipped by another becomes that person's

idol, and any one who sets his affections on such an object or person, breaks the first commandment, which you well know to be, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me;' and from what you have learned of Hezekiah Pendlton, do you think he kept that commandment?"

"No, grandma, I do not, said Ned; "but do tell me what was there."

There were a few partially burnt sticks on the old hearth, a little round table near it, on which was a piece of birch bark, that revealed some figures — columns added, and some not added. These articles, with an old wooden chair without a back, were all of the furnishings; but on the beams, in the angles where the braces met, and in fact on all parts and in all corners of the room, were piles of coins and rolls of bank bills, and hanging from wooden pegs were bags that held from a quart upwards, filled with rusty coppers and odd pieces of coin, the value of which could not be then determined. It was noticeable that at one side there seemed to be an empty appearance, when compared with the other parts, and one remarked, "Well, the old man didn't live long enough to fill up this end." At this time Saul and the girls seemed to be uneasy, yet it was but little noticed, and the work of counting and recording went on. All of the coin that was familiar to the appraisers and of which the value could be determined was thrown into one large box, and that which was not known was deposited in another, while the paper notes were uncertain and given over to Mr. Briggs to be examined by experts in the city, a record of the denominations being made without the value.

The beams being cleared, the company descended to the lower floor, and the work of appraisal contin-



“Mr. Briggs turned the key and swung open the door.”

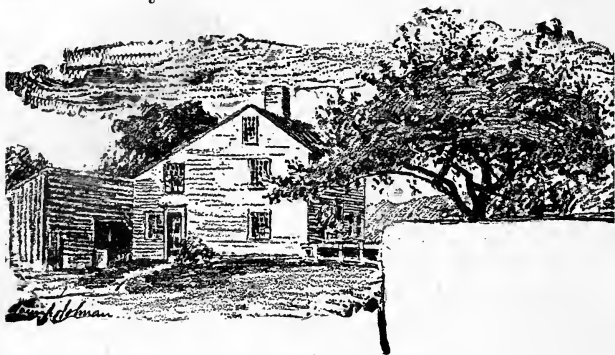
ued with more rapidity, for the heirs were not quite as attentive, and their company might well have been dispensed with ; their duties thus far had been self-imposed, and were mostly those of watching each other. While looking at the cattle in the barn, Squire Taylor said, "If the old man had put a few of those bank bills on the cattle, they would have been in better condition, and I am mistaken if he wouldn't have left more property. I shall miss my guess if half of those rolls that he has been counting over for years, until they are worn thin with his fingering, are not worthless."

After serving a good, hot dinner for the gentlemen, Sally and Priscilla concluded to go up to the mysterious room and give it a cleansing, such as it had not received for many years ; neither broom nor brush had entered there for a score of years, unless their father had taken it, and as that was not in keeping with the habits of Mr. Pendleton, it was not at all likely that any cleaning had been done there at all, and the appearance of the floor and any unoccupied parts indicated neglect, while every corner and angle that held the coin and bills was free from dust and cobwebs, and the hoarded wealth was noticeable for its freedom of dirt, showing conclusively that the owner spent his time here in counting and rearranging his accumulations. Had Mr. Pendleton put his money at interest and spent his time, if he must waste so much of it, in reckoning up the interest, he would have left a much larger estate. Sally was down on her knees peering into every dark corner and giving each part a thorough cleaning, when she discovered a hole, evidently the work of rats, and calling Priscilla, who was up on a stool brushing the

cobwebs from above, a candle was lighted and brought in and investigation made. A bunch of tattered paper was brought out that proved to be parts of bank bills, and aroused the sweepers to such an interest that they hardly knew what course to pursue.

"I'll go and tell Mr. Briggs," said Sally.

"No," said Priscilla, "let's look into the matter ourselves, and if there is anything here we'll keep it. Seth has got the Simpson farm and Saul will git the best of us anyhow."



The Pendleton Homestead.

They concluded to say nothing about it, and sometime when Saul was away they would take up a floor board and see what they could find. Night came on long before the appraisers had completed the round of the buildings. They left the records with Mr. Briggs, and decided to resume work on the following day. Josiah Briggs came for his father with the horse and sled, as the snow had been falling all day and the first sledding of the early winter had come. It was fortunate that the son was so thoughtful, otherwise Mr. Briggs would have been obliged to

remain all night as he had allowed his helpers to go home without making any provision for the safe-keeping of the money, and he could not feel secure in leaving it long enough there with the legal heirs, to go for his team ; and not one of the four children of Hezekiah Pendleton had confidence enough in the others to leave them while the boxes were in the house, so they would not go to the barn to get the Pendleton team for Mr. Briggs.

With the heavy boxes of coin on the sled, Josiah drove off, while his father kept an eye on the precious load. They were but a short distance down the hill when Seth was seen coming the same way, but as Mr. Briggs knew that Saul and the sisters would not be easy if he should permit Seth to ride, he did not halt. On reaching home he found Saul, who had taken a short cut across the lots in order to learn if his brother had got on to the sled and thus had a chance to put his hands into the contents of the boxes. These acts of the Pendleton children were not because of a loss of confidence in Mr. Briggs, but indicated their lack of confidence in each other. The three who lived at home had some reason for the feeling against their older brother, while he distrusted them. A bad state of affairs to be sure, but the Pendleton family was not the only one where such feelings exist and are manifested, especially when there is property left to be divided, and where the members have had the advantages of a better training.

It took more than another day to finish the work. There were broad acres of a heavy growth of the best of timber and many acres of out-land that had to be visited and looked over, and the snow was a hindrance to that part of the work. Ike Fuller con-

vinced Seth and Saul that they would be taxed, if it was known how much property there was, to such an extent, that they would be alarmed; so, with the advice of Fuller, they undertook to persuade Mr. Briggs not to make a correct return of the inventory to the Probate Court, and in fact did try to bribe him and the appraisers as well, but Mr. Briggs was above bribes and true as steel, and went on doing his full duty, fearless of any man. The town was not without jealous people who were ready to say that he would "feather his own nest," but he had such a reputation for truth and veracity, that any thoughtful, honest person in the community would not have the least suspicion of him.

After the work of appraisal was over, Mr. Briggs took a trip to Boston on horse-back, carrying a different load from what he had ever taken before. The large leather saddle bags were thrown over the back of the horse, filled with the coins of doubtful value to be exchanged for currency of the day. He was obliged to make several such journeys for the same purpose before the value of the contents of the boxes was known. And when many of the bank notes were offered for exchange, they proved to be worthless, and the banks which they represented were no longer in existence, and to all appearances were worthless when Mr. Pendleton took them and packed them away in the mysterious room; but as he did not know of their worthlessness, he derived as much comfort from counting them as he did from reckoning up the piles of silver crowns and other pieces; and I don't know but it was just as well for his children as though they had brought par value.

This report disheartened the girls and they at once

lost confidence in their secret prospect, so they told Mr. Briggs about it and he at once took up the floor boards and found that what they had taken from the mouth of the hole was only the beginning of the store that the destructive animals had taken away. Doubtless the greasy surface of the bills had made them doubly attractive to the marauders, and they had gathered a large quantity, the remnants of which filled the largest milk pan of the family; but the mass was so thoroughly torn that it was impossible to make any accurate estimate of the value that had been carried away. The wonderment was that so much could have been taken while Mr. Pendleton lived and not have been missed by him. From the appearance of the nest, it was not a fresh one, and must have been taken from the room some months before.

When this fact became known to the people of the village, it furnished a subject for discussion at many gatherings, and the next meeting at Larkin's shop faithfully considered all sides of the question, and the verdict reached was that Mr. Pendleton did realize that his funds were on the decrease, and this was what made him more fretful towards the end of life; and some of the company fully believed that the anxiety and worriment hastened him to his grave. How much good that old man might have done with the money, and how much better it would have been if he had put it on his cattle as Squire Taylor remarked. All the benefit that can result from the regrets of any one now, must come in the way of guarding against such propensities as predominated in Hezekiah Pendleton.



The Meeting House.

TENTH EVENING.

IN many of the early settlements of New England, the first matters that received the attention of the pioneers were the founding of a church and the settlement of a pastor. He was ordained with very impressive ceremonies, and his term of service was not expected to end until death. Parson Whitford spent his life with the people of this town, and was sincerely mourned at his death.

Rev. Mr. Jones, who had completed his farm buildings, had an eye for the pastorate, and sought an opportunity to be heard, in fact, did go so far as to make himself rather obnoxious to the people; and when he found he was not to be called to the vacant pulpit, he became very morose and said many bitter things and manifested anything but a Christian spirit.

The good folks kept on wondering what he was going to do with his new buildings. "Fine chance

for somebody," said Hannah Nibbs one day when calling at the Pendletons and sympathizing with the family.

Mr. Briggs was now very busy with his own duties and the added cares of the Pendletons; but the increased burden was lightened by the willingness of the family to do whatever the administrator suggested; and had they not felt called upon to submit so much to him for decision, the duties would not have absorbed so much of his time. One day, when Mr. Briggs was very busy about his farm work, Saul came down the hill at a rapid pace and demanded his immediate presence at the house. Feeling that the case was urgent, he responded, expecting to find Seth in an intoxicated state over there making a disturbance, as he was the only member of the family that gave him any trouble whatever; but on reaching the house he found everything quiet and no appearance of Seth's having been there for some days. The occasion of the call was ascertained when Sally opened the door to the great brick oven and showed the mop that Priscilla had placed there to dry. They had been baking in the oven during the day, and there being a little heat left, Priscilla thought it a good time to dry the mop. This was out of the regular order of things. The Pendletons were very neat, although Hannah did insinuate that such was not the case, and Sally could not allow her to make this departure, hence a dispute arose which seemed to be coming to a serious pass when it was decided that Mr. Briggs should come, and whatever he said was right should meet with the family approval. He took the mop from the oven and, after giving a little advice as to some phy-

sical treatment, returned to his home, somewhat amused, to be sure, yet feeling gratified that the family were so ready to accept his decisions.

In regard to the property, the law was to direct the division, there being no will. The contents of the mysterious room was divided very soon, each having a share. Saul was to carry on the farm for a while and have the income of it for the support of his mother, while the girls were to have their living at home as long as they remained and administered to the wants of her who, through many privations, had faithfully cared for them. Saul could not manage the work of the farm without the aid of his sisters. They were as handy as men at almost any department of the farm work. They always did the milking, and could hold the plough as skilfully as Seth or Saul.

Things went on very comfortably for a season, but new burdens were to be taken up and new responsibilities were to be assumed. How to invest the amounts which they had already in their possession, was an important question, and when to say "no" to the various parties who beset them on every hand with all sorts of attractions, was a matter difficult to decide. Hanson Page had already persuaded Saul to buy his "brindles" at a fabulous price, and a long shining chain now hung from his homespun waistcoat; but the watch was such as Ike Fuller would be expected to sell, and not to be relied upon.

It was fortunate for Sally and Priscilla that they had taken Mrs. Briggs for an adviser. Dolly was a true friend, and when they followed her advice it was to their advantage. Many who had made sport of the Pendletons in earlier years, began to court

their society, and, I am sorry to say, some of them sought not for the companionship of the members of the family as much as they did for the advantage which they might get over them, who, in almost every transaction where money was involved, were imposed upon, unless they took the advice of Mr. Briggs or his wife. The reason of this was their neglected childhood. Never having been trusted with responsibilities while their father lived, they knew but little how to assume them now, and not having had money to spend they were illy prepared to use it to their advantage now that they had it in their possession.

Mr. Jones had completed his buildings, and for some months had been conducting the business of his farm by the aid of a housekeeper, but when he was obliged to conclude that he was not wanted to fill the pulpit made vacant by the death of Mr. Whitford, he at once decided that he could manage things alone, so dismissed his faithful servant and decided that he would not try to make his home attractive to the public.

Early in the spring following the death of Mr. Pendleton, Mr. Jones drove one afternoon into the Briggs' yard, tied the old white horse to the block, and pleasantly saluted Mrs. Briggs, who, having seen him from her window, was at the door before he had smoothed down the wig which hid his bald head and scanty gray locks. She made him welcome. He was a man of but few words, and when he had any business to do, came to it without indulging in many preliminaries. It was an uncommon thing for Mr. Jones to call in this way at the home of the Briggs', hence Mrs. Dolly was confident that something important

and uncommonly pressing had caused him to come out, which she soon found to be the case.

"Mrs. Briggs, I need a wife," he abruptly said, "and I have come to secure your assistance in the matter."

"Indeed," said Mrs. Briggs, with an inflection and look that awakened courage in the caller. "This is a very important step for any one to take, and it is not reasonable to suppose that every one can fill the important position of a minister's wife. Whom were you thinking of centering your affections upon, may I ask?"

"Well, Mrs. Briggs," said Mr. Jones, giving his chair a little hitch and looking at either side to be sure that no one was near to overhear the secret he was about to entrust to her, "I had been thinking that Priscilla Pendleton would be just the one for me, and knowing that she and the whole family are very intimate friends of yours, I have called, after much prayerful consideration, to ask you if you would be so kind and obliging as to ascertain if a call from me would be agreeable to Miss Priscilla, the younger of the promising ladies."

"Perhaps you are not aware that it is a plan in the family that Sally, the older, must be married first," said Mrs. Briggs.

"Yes, madam, I am aware of that; but perhaps as they are now differently situated, they may be willing to abandon that plan," replied the persistent seeker.

On receiving a favorable reply from Mrs. Briggs, the clergyman retired, promising to call in a few days and learn what impression was made by the proposition. The call and the occasion of it were

reported to Mr. Briggs on his arrival home, and they both concluded that even the minister had an eye to this world's goods, and both feared that it was money which he was seeking for, as well as a wife, but it was evident to all that he did need a companion, and Mr. and Mrs. Briggs both thought he was wise in his choice.

Betsey, a black-eyed niece of Mrs. Briggs, had recently come to make her home with her aunt, and had now for the first time learned something of the Pendleton family, as she had overheard the conversation between her aunt and Mr. Jones.

Mrs. Briggs was as good as her word, and soon called on the Pendletons and laid the matter before the family. At first Sally made strong objections, and insisted that as she was the older she must be married first, and that by right she ought to have the proposal; yet when convinced that the minister was decided and that it must be Priscilla or neither, she reluctantly concluded that she would give way and let Priscilla have the offer, realizing that this might make way for herself.

Mrs. Briggs soon made it convenient to inform Mr. Jones that his attention would be agreeably received, and he promised to call again and notify her when the first visit should be made; as she had confidentially suggested to make a head dress for Priscilla that she might be in an attractive attire when the clergyman should make his first call, believing that first impressions were lasting.

Betsey had some modern ideas of millinery and promised to aid her aunt in the work of preparing Priscilla for the visit. The Pendleton girls were not very particular about their dress when about home,

and Mrs. Briggs was in hopes to have an opportunity to procure lace, and with the assistance of her niece, to make a tasty cap for Priscilla before the first meeting; but before the opportunity came, as Mrs. Briggs was leaving her home with the purpose of calling on the Pendletons for an afternoon chat, she looked down the road towards the village and saw Mr. Jones' white-faced horse coming towards her. Believing that the minister was out for the important call, she started Josiah across lots to notify Miss Priscilla that she might make preparations. When Mr. Jones overtook Mrs. Briggs, he drew up his horse and asked her to ride, telling her that he was about to make the proposed call. Mrs. Briggs felt it to be her duty to reprimand the reverend gentleman, a very bold thing for any one to do in those days. Said she, "You are not doing according to your agreement, for you promised to give me due notice, and I had arranged to notify the lady. I am afraid she won't be ready for this call."

"Never mind about that," said the suitor, "I shan't be so likely to be deceived."

If they had known what was in his heart, they would have seen that it was not necessary to make any change in dress, for truly, I must confess, that it afterwards proved that money was the first object of Mr. Jones' search, and a wife was a secondary matter. A clergyman should have had a better motive, as a minister of the gospel is expected to be exemplary in every particular. While driving leisurely along, the old horse came to a sudden stop.

"Is your horse contrary, Mr. Jones?" said his companion.

"No — no," replied the clergyman; "he has only stopped to take breath."

With his lungs well inflated, he started on and soon reached the top of the hill. While Mr. Jones was making his horse secure, Mrs. Briggs hastened in to the aid of Priscilla, who was already doing her best to make a fine appearance, Josiah having warned her of the coming event. It was in the same room that Amariah Quimby received his lasting rebuff, that Rev. Mr. Jones met a cordial welcome; but things had changed — some years had passed, age was creeping on, making unmistakable furrows in the faces of both Sally and her fairer sister; the tyrant had been called from his den; the mysterious room had given up its contents; its treasures were divided, and in some instances were being rapidly scattered. Mrs. Briggs managed soon to have an excuse for leaving the room and succeeded in calling out the mother and Sally as well, so that the room was left with only two occupants, and no more were wanted.

ELEVENTH EVENING.

WHILE Mrs. Briggs was at the Pendletons with Mr. Jones, Mr. Briggs took a walk over the hill through "Love Lane" to Deacon Sprague's to look at some cattle, and as the road lay by Seth Pendleton's, he dropped in to say a neighborly word. On entering the room he plainly saw by

the appearance of Patty, that things were not going on altogether right, and he asked for Seth. Patty hesitated at first, but finally, in a discouraged manner, did say, "I may as well tell you the whole matter. I know you are friendly towards us and will not unkindly expose our misfortunes. Seth has not been himself at all since you paid him his share of the money. You know he went right off and bought that horse and chaise, and he has been riding ever since; and Ike Fuller and Hanson Page have been with him continually, one or the other being away with him all the time. To be sure he provides enough to eat, but beside that I have not seen a dollar and I don't know what he is doing with it."

Here Patty hesitated, but soon started again, as if determined to secrete her troubles no longer.

"I believe that Ike Fuller is not hanging around Seth from any good motive, and as for Hanson Page, I think he'd better stay at home with his wife, for there she is, poor woman, and can't get out at all."

"Where is Seth to-day?" interrupted Mr. Briggs.

"Oh, he hasn't been off the bed yet," said Patty.

"He didn't get home till almost morning, and then he was so much the worse for liquor, that I had to put the horse in the stable; and I have done all the chores at the barn. Now, Mr. Briggs," she continued, "I am about discouraged, and sometimes wish his father had not left a cent. When Seth is at home he is either half drunk or scolding about Saul and the girls, who, he says, are getting more than he is; but I know, and so does he when he is sober, that you are doing everything right, and that they ought to have their living from the farm if they stay and take care of their mother."

"Yes; and you know that this farm was a gift right out to Seth by his father," said Mr. Briggs.

"I know it," sadly replied Patty, "and I wish I had never" —

At this time in stepped Joe Nibbs, who was a brother to Hannah; he had been away for some years, but had lately come home to take charge of the farm and look after his mother with the aid of his sister.

"They do tell me," said Joe, "that Ike Fuller is going to build a barn right off, and Hannah says his wife told her they had money enough on hand to put it right up and have no mortgage on it either. Now, I don't see through it," said Joe, "for Ike don't attend to his affairs half as well as some of them round here, and they couldn't build a barn if they wanted to, and can't pay off what they do owe on the old one, half of them; but Hannah says, and she knows, for she has got it right from Huldah, that Ike has had great luck lately and struck some fine bargains, so they are going to have a right smart barn."

"Indeed," said Mr. Briggs, "this is news. I knew that Mr. Fuller needed a barn, and so do I, but I had not learned that he felt equal to building at present. I guess the watch speculation is profitable just now."

Patty did venture to say, "I guess he wouldn't have built a barn if Mr. Pendleton had lived; poor, foolish man he was, to deny his family the comforts of life and a respectable schooling, and leave his money to be wasted in this maner, just thrown away by his own children."

The appearance of Seth from the bed-room put a sudden stop to Patty's sensible remarks. One needed to take but a look at Seth to know it all. Ike Fuller and others had taken the advantage of his ignorance

and weakness and persuaded him to drink repeatedly, until he was becoming a confirmed drunkard; and these continued drives from home were bringing desolation upon the farm, sorrow to his neglected family, and shame and ruin to himself. Patty did what she could in caring for the stock and looking after affairs outside; but these duties, added to the care of three children, were too much for any woman, and she was losing courage, thus making the outlook very bad for the occupants of the Simpson farm. Many women, under better circumstances, would have lost courage long before Patty did, but she was a true wife and mother, and as such, struggled on, bending more and more in both mind and body as the burden grew heavy and this troublesome journey lengthened.

When Seth realized that Mr. Briggs was present, he tried to appear decently, but it was with difficulty that he walked across the room, and seeing the real state of affairs, the good neighbor left the house, wishing he could do something to bring about a change in that home.

Mr. Briggs went on to Deacon Sprague's, looked at the cattle with an eye to purchasing, then hastened home to find his good wife Dolly with Betsey and the boys, waiting tea for him. When seated about the table they reported the experiences of the afternoon, while George, Josiah and their black-eyed cousin gave more heed to the reports than to the food before them.

"I was never more amused than during my visit this afternoon," said Dolly. "We were all in the best room together, when I felt that Mr. Jones was being placed in a very trying position, so I managed to leave the room, and Sally and her mother followed

me, which left Mr. Jones and Priscilla alone, just what I suppose they wanted. Mother Pendleton, Sally and I sat down for a good visit as I expected, but in less than twenty minutes from the time we left the room, Priscilla came out looking wonderfully smiling, followed by Mr. Jones, who entered into conversation with Mother and Sally. Priscilla called me into the cheese room, and when she was sure we were alone and away from the hearing of any one, she said, 'What shall I get for my wedding gown?' This, I must confess, surprised me, but I found that the case was fully settled and they were engaged. Priscilla wants to do everything up in grand style, but, poor woman, she knows very little of the world, and I fear, by this unreasonable haste, shows that she does not fully realize what a great change she is about to make. I only hope it will prove a wise step and that Mr. Jones will make her a kind husband, and I fully believe she will do her best to fill the position. Priscilla is so utterly incapable of going to town to make the needful purchases, I have consented to go to Boston with her, and she wants to go immediately. I believe she is fully as anxious to bring the serious matter to a close as Mr. Jones is, and when you can make it convenient, I wish you would drive us to Boston and aid in the purchases. If left alone with her inexperience she is liable to be imposed upon. Those clerks will give one anything for dress fabric and trimmings when they see that a customer is not posted as to the fashions and is not accustomed to making selections. All the neighbors will blame us if anything in her outfit is not appropriate. There will be one pleasant feature about this

business, Priscilla has a plenty of money and there's no need of economizing."

"Yes; and I don't know but it may as well be spent in that way as to go as I feel that Seth's is going," said Mr. Briggs. "Now that you have told your experience this afternoon, I will tell mine."

"Oh, did you buy father's cows?" interrupted Dolly.

"No, I did not," was the reply. "I called in to Seth's on the way and was so troubled by what I saw and learned, that I did not feel like making an offer just then, and your father was engaged with some people on church business."

"What is the trouble at Seth's?" interrupted Dolly again; whereupon Mr. Briggs told the whole story and what Joe Nibbs had told them about Ike Fuller's building prospects.

"I declare," said Dolly, "I suppose it won't do for any one to say what they think; but what a pity it is that these Pendletons hadn't been allowed to mingle more with the world and been educated a little so as to have more judgment in their dealings with these smooth-tongued fellows who pretend to be so very friendly, and are nothing but wolves in sheep's clothing."

"I have feared for a long time that Seth's old appetite was getting the mastery of him," said Mr. Briggs, thoughtfully; but I don't know what can be done; there is no Mr. Whitford to talk to him now. When he signed the pledge, he was led to it by the persuasions of the deacon, who, he thought, would aid him in getting Patty if he should gratify him by signing, and joining the temperance society; but there is no such motive to impel him to keep his

pledge, "and in fact, every influence is on the other side, for his companions now are so unlike those who aided him at that time."

"But," said Dolly, "are not the good people of that temperance society to blame for allowing Seth to drift away from them and their influence, and giving these bad people a chance to overpower him in this way; and must we not take a little of the blame to ourselves?"

"Possibly we are at fault," said Mr. Briggs, with an apparent twinge of conscience, "but what is to be done? If I go to making myself too conspicuous in the case, Fuller and Page and such men will try to make Seth believe that I am aiming to do what we think these evil-minded men are doing."

"Sure enough," said Dolly. "Oh, if Mr. Whitford was alive; but it is useless to talk about that, the good Heavenly Father has called him home, and it is the duty of the people to do the more now that he is gone. I think that is one of the best ways for a person to show regard for a friend who is called from this earth."

"That is very true," said Mr. Briggs, "but my one and only objection to organizations for reform of all kinds, as you well know, is their spasmodic way of conducting them. They will get aroused and make a great effort for a time and draw in large numbers, many of whom are brought in through excitement, and when that subsides, the most active fail to keep up their enthusiasm, and those who are not firm of purpose drop off and by their conduct often bring reproach upon the cause. Seth's case is just an illustration."

"I know the ground on which you base your objec-

tions," said Dolly; "but did you throw away all those bank notes that you found in Mr. Pendleton's room just because some proved to be worthless?"

Here the conversation was brought to a sudden close by the appearance of Hannah Nibbs, who "just dropped in for a few moments," as she said, but which proved to be for some hours. Hannah was not in the habit of making short calls. She had been very careful about calling at Mr. Briggs' since she left so unceremoniously; but now having a new topic for discussion, it was impossible for her to keep away. Betsey's black eyes and keen wit furnished not a little attraction, while this new member of the Briggs family saw in Hannah a most interesting character.

"I guess Patty Potter is sick of her bargain by this time," were the first words that Hannah said on entering the house, and she had part of her salutation expressed before she was seated. "They tell me that Seth is drunk half his time, and he isn't any too kind either," she continued. "It's plain enough to be seen that all he joined the temperance society for was to get Patty. I thought so then; I wouldn't have had him if he had signed the pledge a dozen times. I know what them Pendletons are, although the gals do step so fine now they have got a lot of money; if they don't look out it will go as Seth's is going. Yes; go to build a barn for Ike Fuller. I don't care what anybody says, I just speak right out what I think, and it's what everybody else thinks too. And they say Priscilla is going to have Priest Jones."

"Who says that?" exclaimed Dolly, supposing no one could have learned of the call so soon.

"Who? I guess you know all about it. Your Josiah is pretty close mouthed, I know, but he did

tell Ned Page where he had been this afternoon and what his errand was, and I was down to see Ned's mother when he came home and told it, so Hepsy and I just put our heads together and studied it out. Poor Hepsy, she is so lame, and she does so long to get out and see folks and get the news too. Why, she says it is as good as a sewing meeting to her to have me come down, and if I can do any good in that way I am sure I am willing to do it. I do think people ought to be more willing to do good in the world now that Mr. Whitford is gone. But poor Patty—she ought to have known better than to have taken that awkward Seth Pendleton; and I should think them folks that helped along the match would feel a little disturbed by things at the Simpson farm. Patty is welcome to all she can get out of that farm. I hope Priscilla will make out better. I should think some folks would be more careful how they help on these matches; but perhaps they can get some of that money if they only help the gals get married. I hope Priscilla will be a better housekeeper in her own home than she has ever been yet."

The soliloquy, for such it seemed, being directed to no one in particular, was brought to a close, or the subject changed, by a word from Mr. Briggs, who roguishly said, "I have heard that Saul is paying his visits rather more often than has been his habit, to the Nibbs family."

"Yes," said Hannah, as she rose to go, "Joe and he always were intimate."

It was decided that the Boston trip should be made early in the next week, and Dolly, in the meantime, was to make out a list of the articles to be bought, which she faithfully did. .

The time for closing an evening's story had arrived. The tall clock that stood in the corner had struck nine, and grandma arose to draw up the weights, pausing to hastily add a few practical remarks by which she hoped to make a lasting impression on the boy, who sat at her knee and eagerly drank in every word of her story. Said grandma, "I want you to learn from the facts that I have given you this evening the folly of living for money, if you have not already been sufficiently impressed with the lessons of former evenings, and also to see that the evils of such conduct do not fall entirely on one person, and quite often not upon the one who is in the wrong. Mr. Pendleton lived for money, but much of the evil of his wrong doing fell upon his children as you see, and will yet learn that his good, pure-hearted wife was also a sufferer."

TWELFTH EVENING.

IARKIN'S shop was alive with the notes of the town-folks who dropped in for a little chat, and the various speakers did not hesitate to comment on the prospects of Ike Fuller. The round-faced man showed a good deal of feeling over the downfall of Seth, and was the only one known to make a personal effort to reclaim the unfortunate man and relieve Patty of her trouble; but his efforts were of little avail.

That the report was correct was soon apparent, for Ike Fuller had a gang of men at work laying the cellar wall, and the lot of noble oaks on Seth Pendleton's farm were fast being cut and hewn for the building.

"What did I tell you?" said Hannah, one morn-

ing as Mr. Briggs was passing the Nibbs house. "How much do you suppose Ike Fuller pays for them oaks that Hezekiah Pendleton watched so many years, hey?" continued Hannah.

"I don't know, I am sure," said Mr. Briggs; "but we have no right to say that he does not pay all they are worth. The timber belongs to Seth and he is at liberty to dispose of it as he pleases. It is grand timber that they are getting out, and I see no reason why they may not put up a superior barn, and I hope Mr. Fuller will enjoy it, for to be sure he needs it very much."

"I tell Joe," said Hannah, "that he had better renew his acquaintance with Seth and see if we can't have a new barn as well as Ike."

"Now, Miss Nibbs," said Mr. Briggs, "you don't mean that you would have a barn obtained by any unfair or underhanded means."

"No, to be sure not," replied Hannah, just as her mother came forward and offered Mr. Briggs a pinch of snuff, while taking some herself. Mrs. Nibbs was noted for being the greatest snuff-taker in the neighborhood, and always had the best quality of Rappee and Maccoboy mixed. Mr. Briggs commented on the weather, but the good woman failing to hear, cried out, "Meditating, as usual." With a gentlemanly salutation, Mr. Briggs hastened on his way.

It was the custom for people to prepare their timber for building in the winter, when the work of the farm was not so pressing as in the spring and summer, and when the sap was not so active. The fact that Fuller allowed the winter to pass, also the early spring months, before he began his work of felling the stately oaks, caused those who were the least

inclined to suspect wrong of their neighbors to be a little suspicious that everything was not straight in the purchase of this timber of Seth Pendleton; and it seemed utterly impossible for Fuller to get his barn ready for the hay when harvested. After some weeks, during which there was much discussion through the community, all hands were bidden to the raising at Fuller's. Joshua Paine was the master builder, and he had a large gang of workmen, who could drink as much hard cider as any men in the country; they could also do as much work as any company of laborers of equal number.

The day was clear and calm in the morning, and all things looked favorable for a successful raising; but to Hannah there seemed to appear an omen of evil, for a crow chanced to light on a tree near the piles of lumber.

In those days the building was framed and put together on the ground, and raised one side at a time, being pulled into an erect position by the great company that always gathered for the purpose, with the expectation of being treated to a good feast and a plenty of strong drink, according to the custom. Boys were there as well as men, and not a few women aided in preparing the dinner. Hannah was leader in the house, for Mrs. Fuller was in poor health, and Hannah always had so much sympathy, and not a little curiosity, that she volunteered to be present, and but few could be found in all the village who were as capable and willing as she, and her strength, with her power of endurance, led many to call upon her, when some one less inclined to comment would have been preferred.

I regret to say that at Fuller's raising, three tubs

were brought out, and early in the day, were filled to the brim with as many kinds of drink and of different degrees of strength. It was for the free use of the workmen, and those who looked on also, and the latter never failed to exercise that right. Before the work began it was the custom for the clergyman of the town to offer prayer, and as the society had not yet called one to fill the vacant desk, Mr. Jones was invited and performed the service to the gratification of all. Hepsy Page, who had been brought over, despite her lameness, in Seth Pendleton's chaise, remarked that she thought Mr. Jones would make a good pastor for them, and as he had settled in town it would be convenient for him and for the people. Having a home already established, they would not be expected to give him a settlement fee. Hannah ventured to say in reply, "He might do well enough, but what sort of a minister's wife would Priscilla Pendleton make?"

All agreed with Hannah that she was not one whom they could respect as they had Mrs. Whitford.

Hannah brought that conversation to a close by saying, "If Mr. Jones is so foolish as to take Priscilla Pendleton for a wife, and that is what he is going to do, why, we won't have him for our minister."

A grand hurrah from the assembled crowd attracted the attention of the women, and by one pull the first side was put in an upright position and held there, while Paine hastened from stick to stick and drove the fastening pins. Soon the opposite side was up, and the ends were in place before many hours; thus the long anticipated job was well under way before Hannah Nibbs was ready to serve the great feast,

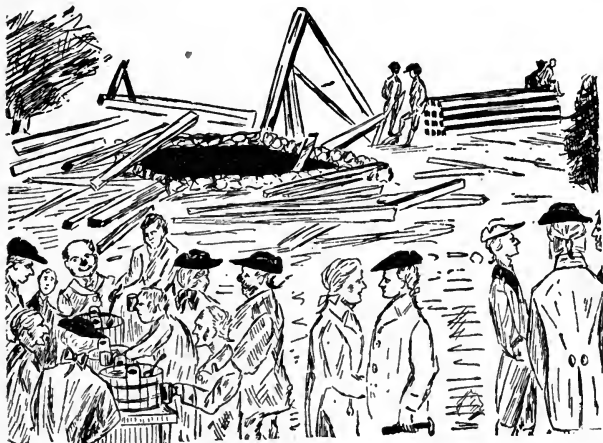
having given them a lunch earlier, "just to stay their stomachs," she said.

While the company was disposing of the ham of Fuller's best curing and the eggs, Hannah doing her best in serving, one of the youths who was waiting for the second sitting was heard to say, "Do you see that cloud over there coming from the north?"

"Yes," was the word that came from Hannah, who was passing the door at the time and stopped to reply, although she had not seen it or thought of it until she heard the voice outside; but her desire to be the first to see or know anything always kept her ready to make a reply, and sometimes placed her in an awkward position, especially when she gave an answer that was the very opposite from what she would have given had she understood the nature of the question. "Yes, I see it," said Hannah, "and it is just what I expected. That crow meant something, I knew."

By the time the boys were seated at the table for their share in the feast, the cloud had become very large and the wind was fast rising. Paine, fearing bad results, and knowing that the frame would not stand through a great blow in its present condition, ordered all hands at work to make it more secure; but a sudden gust, then a whirl of wind, together with hail and rain, dashed down upon them before they were aware of it, and this was followed by others of increased violence, until a wrench, a twist, and a crash settled the whole, and the frame of the building was brought to the ground. The timber was in a more useless condition than before it was taken from Seth Pendleton's lot; but worse than all that, two of the young men were killed by the falling timbers.

While the living were exerting every muscle to remove the mass of timbers in order to get at the lifeless forms, after the dreadful cloud passed over, Hannah was hastening from man to man, exclaiming, "I told you so; that crow was a warning; and what will poor Amy say when she knows her Thad is dead?"



The Crow and the Raising.

One of the unfortunate workmen was engaged to a promising young lady who had not appeared at the raising, and Hannah at once aroused her sympathy for the one who soon must know that her fondest hopes were blasted. The living soon separated, to return to their homes, and the dead were given Christian attention; but Larkin's shop still kept up its busy hum, and the company again gathered there to exchange regrets and speculate on the cause of the calamity.

"The innocent must suffer with the guilty," said Mr. Spencer, continuing to base his ideas on the Scriptures. "If Ike Fuller got the timbers for his barn in an underhanded way, and this storm was directed by God as a punishment for his evil doing, why, Thaddeus Peterson and Jacob Paine were the innocent who have been cut off, while Fuller still remains.

THIRTEENTH EVENING.

IN the appointed day, Mr. and Mrs. Briggs, with Priscilla, made the important trip to Boston. The Pendleton girls had both been in Boston several times, and Priscilla was not so ignorant of city ways as one would have expected; but she often did and said things while on this shopping trip that brought mortification to her companions, and gave occasion for much sport on the part of the clerks.

Her money was carried in a bead bag or purse that she had borrowed for the day of Mrs Briggs; it was well filled. The dealers, when seeing the quantity of coins from which they were paid for their goods, and the apparent freedom with which their customer distributed it, became unusually attentive to the purchasers, all the time deriving much amusement from their conversation with them.

"Is that what you sell for a wedding gown?" said

Priscilla to a smiling clerk, while she began to pull over some pieces of gaudy fabrics before him.

"Yes," replied the clerk with a roguish curl of the mouth, "if any one wants it; but here is the very article so very becoming to one of your style of beauty."



"Is that what you sell for a wedding gown?"

This interested Priscilla, whose joy now seemed beyond expression. To be called handsome, for she understood it thus, and with a sure prospect of marriage in the near future, she needed nothing more to perfect her happiness. She really seemed overcome with joy, and had she been making her purchases unattended, might have become the victim of wholesale imposition and the object of ridicule. I must say, although not to the credit of clerks, that in those

days, as well as in these, when business is very differently conducted, purchasers were often made sport of when innocently looking about for those things which they were ready to procure. It mattered not where they were from, some peculiarity was often detected, and the thoughtless person behind the counter revealed his ill-manners in making fun, while he thought he was displaying his wit in creating a laugh in others as ungentlemanly as himself. The clerk had riveted Priscilla's attention by his seeming flattery, and she continued her inquiry by saying, "Do you think it fit for me when I am going to marry a minister?"

On being assured that it was well adapted to the purpose, she exclaimed to Mrs. Briggs, who had lingered at another counter, "I have got it; just the thing for a minister's wife, he says," starting to meet her adviser, while holding the end of the web of silk with one hand and grasping her bead bag by the other.

Mrs. Briggs, however, persuaded her that another shade would be more desirable, and a more subdued pattern would be quite as becoming for one who was to occupy the important position of a minister's wife. Priscilla, as ever, was perfectly willing to listen to Mrs. Briggs, and the selection was made at another counter, to the apparent displeasure of the clerk who had interested himself so much in the customer from the country, and who had already begun to anticipate a word of commendation from his employer when he should inform him that he had disposed of a shop-worn pattern which had been on hand a long time. A generous number of yards were purchased, more than Mrs. Briggs thought necessary, but as Priscilla

was anxious to have everything made in the very best of style, a large pattern of each kind selected was decided upon. Priscilla opened the bead bag and paid the price of the wedding gown with some of the identical money that was taken from the mysterious room. She did not fail to inform the attending salesmen in every store which the purchasing party entered, the occasion of this visit to Boston; and when any inquiry was made on the part of the clerk, the whole story was told, and it seemed as though the whole town must know of the plans of Priscilla Pendleton before the goods were all selected. The entire day was spent and many stores were visited before the list was filled.

Priscilla did not intend to be outdone by any one in the way of fine dress and trimmings, and as she had been deprived for so many years of the real necessities of life, now that she had the power and the opportunity, she was the more determined to go to the opposite extreme. She was to learn that fine clothes would not make a lady; and that Priscilla Pendleton in the finest and most costly attire could not appear as one. She had had no training in manners and customs outside of the limited sphere in which she had always moved, and being far behind the ruling customs of her immediate neighbors, she was regarded an object of pity by the thoughtful and kind-hearted. She, with the whole Pendleton family, were the occasion of many a joke among the thoughtless; but not so much so since they had come into the possession of wealth. It was noticeable that people who seldom spoke to Saul, Sally and Priscilla before the death of their father, were now very attentive and polite, and in some instances made

special exertions to take notice of them. The one whose friendship is aroused by selfish motives like this is not the true friend and should never be trusted.

The weeks and months that followed the trip to Boston were busy ones at the home of the Pendletons. The faithful mother kept the wheel going to bring out the good homespun linen for the beds. She was desirous that the first daughter who married "should have a good setting out." Sally was rather slow to lend a hand at first, not having fully recovered from her disappointment; but she finally listened to the advice of Mrs. Briggs and took hold in earnest, it having been decided that she should have the same amount of things prepared for her future use as Priscilla was having made for her immediate demand. This plan, of course, required twice the time, and months passed before Priscilla was ready to decide upon the day for the marriage.

During these busy days, Priscilla occasionally received a call from Mr. Jones, but it was seldom of more than an hour's duration, and often made while the family were present, Sally never being known to stop her work for one moment. On one occasion Mr. Jones was persuaded to stop to tea, and Sally volunteered to prepare the meal, which seemed quite surprising to Priscilla until they were seated at the table and the tea was poured, when catnip flavor was recognized by Priscilla, who, in what she intended for a whisper, said to her sister, "It is catnip, Sally."

The reply, "'Tis good enough for him," easily heard by all at the table, was extremely mortifying to Priscilla, but apparently unheeded by Mr. Jones. Sally also manifested her displeasure by serving her

guest with a skimmed milk curd instead of their best quality. Mr. Jones saw the situation and turned the joke upon Sally by freely complimenting her for her good taste and remarkable skill in domestic matters.

While Mrs. Briggs was busy at her wheel one afternoon giving instructions to her niece Betsey, who had reached her "teens" without this accomplishment, she heard the familiar "Whoa!" of Mr. Jones, as he stopped his horse at the end door. She hastened down to meet him as she expected a call, and was not disappointed. In the course of conversation Mrs. Briggs ventured to express the same idea to her caller that she had repeatedly in her own family, but in very careful language, for she was not wanting in that unswerving regard for the clergy that prompted universal respect, and in many, a reverential awe. "It seems to me, Mr. Jones, that you hardly stop long enough with Miss Priscilla to become well acquainted."

"Been acquainted this many a year," was the prompt reply of the elderly suitor. His arrogant spirit rebelled against this reprimand, and he soon found it best to head his white horse towards his home.

An unexpected difficulty now arose at the Pendleton home. Sally, who had been to all appearances quite contented of late, was not so complacent as she appeared outwardly, and she had succeeded in arousing Saul to an uncomfortable state of mind, and they seemed determined to do something to get even with Priscilla. On the evening of the day that Mr. Jones called and was admonished by Mrs. Briggs, they started down to call on their faithful friends and give vent to their feelings. The burden of their

whole trouble was the forthcoming marriage of Priscilla. Sally insisted that, as her sister was younger, she had no right to make that change in her relations before she did. Saul had an idea that Hannah Nibbs had been quite attentive of late when he called to see her brother Joseph; and Sally had come to the conclusion that the only way to keep up with her sister was to have just such things made as Priscilla did, and be ready in case she should have an offer. With the ever-ready good and wise counsel of Mr. and Mrs. Briggs, they returned to their home, apparently satisfied, but not to retire to rest, as we shall see on another evening.

“Ned,” said grandma, “you must see that the money which these people had so longed to get into their possession did not bring happiness, and it seldom does when it is unlawfully obtained or falls into hands like the Pendletons. Money is good when honestly obtained and kept for a good use; but when not, it is a curse. You see that it was the want of money that caused the unrest in the Pendleton family for some years, and now the possession of it was really the cause of an equally restless spirit.

FOURTEENTH EVENING.

ISAAC FULLER learned no helpful lesson from his disappointment in the raising of his barn, and soon made preparation for another gala day. Hannah Nibbs was not slow in her work of persuading the town folks that the curse of God rested on

that enterprise; that the crow of that eventful morning was a most peculiar bird and had a very unearthly look when giving the warning that ought to have been heeded, and that Ike Fuller had not obtained so much money in so short a time honestly. She also urged that the calamity proved God's displeasure with Fuller's work, and that he was visiting wrath already upon the smooth-tongued fellow. This impression was so general, that when Fuller announced that all was ready for another raising, but few responded, and Fuller's wrath was beyond expression. He determined to give himself no rest until he had punished the one whom he blamed for this; but he had misjudged somewhat, for Larkin's shop had not been free from discussions on the subject. Hannah had suggested the matter in the homes of several of the frequenters of this rainy day resort.

Fuller had again secured the confidence of Seth Pendleton, with whom he had been less neighborly since his cash was exhausted. Seth was now a miserable drunkard. The Simpson farm was still in his possession, but fast running down, and would have been well covered with mortgage had not his wife refused to sign the papers. Coin from Fuller's well-filled purse served as an effectual bait, and Seth was again under the control of Fuller, but for what reason it was difficult to tell; even Hannah was at a loss to know what motive to assign as the occasion of the renewal of the friendship between that once friendly couple. It was well known that Seth had no ready cash with which to pay the bills that were incurred by a repetition of the old-time sprees; yet Fuller was artful, and took this roundabout way to punish Hannah. His plan for accomplishing this purpose

was somewhat complicated, and no one but a studied mischief-maker would have thought of such. To arouse Seth to the point where he would make trouble for his brother, and thus frustrate some plans of Hannah's, was his determined purpose.

Fuller labored with Seth until he convinced him that Saul and his sisters were in league against him; that they would never be so united unless they were bent upon mischief and were making some plan to cheat him out of his part of the property that yet remained undivided, and which Mr. Briggs was determined should remain intact as long as possible. He saw what poor use Seth was making of the share already in his possession, and felt that it ought to be kept for the benefit of the faithful wife, who even now had to plan most carefully for the comfort of the three children, whose needs were poorly supplied. It was not long before Seth was fully convinced that he was being wronged, and he hastened to see Mr. Briggs, and talked in a most vociferous manner about the property, Saul, and his sisters, until Mr. Briggs hardly knew how to pacify and persuade him that all was right as he believed it was. Until now, he had been able to quiet Seth when he became uneasy about the delayed division. This was not the first time he had complained to the administrator of the estate, although in a very different manner, and Mr. Briggs did not fully understand the cause of this great change in Seth's deportment; but he mistrusted that Fuller was at the bottom of it, for he had noticed that he had kept away from him for some weeks, and he believed, what is often true, that when a person suddenly begins to shun another whom he has been friendly with, it indicates that he has been talking

maliciously of that one, or is planning mischief. After the advice of Mr. Briggs, Seth started for his home, but suddenly determined to go to the old homestead on the hill, bent on making trouble if possible. He found all hands, except the mother, busy in the preparations for the marriage; even Saul had become so far interested as to aid in the use of the great wheel that was kept whirling from morning till night.

Said Seth, with his usual abruptness, "I know what you are about here, and I am just going to put a stop to it. I believe you have been stealing from me and are doing it now. Ike Fuller says you are, and we are bound to spoil your fun and put you out of here. It's just nonsense for you all three to have your living from this farm just to take care of ma'am."

The expressions on the faces of the trio were enough to convince any one that they had been guilty of something which Mr. Briggs had not been consulted about. "A guilty conscience needs no accuser." Seth was sharp enough to detect this, and made such threats that Sally tremblingly said if they would send for Mr. Briggs they would tell the whole. This was agreed upon, and Saul started for the one in whom they all had confidence. It was nearing midnight; the quiet sleep of Mr. and Mrs. Briggs was suddenly disturbed by a rap at the bed-room window.

"Who's there?" shouted Mr. Briggs.

"'Tis Saul; and we want you right up to the house at once for there is trouble," replied the harsh voice of the angry Saul.

Mrs. Briggs, supposing that sickness must have driven him out at this late hour, exclaimed, "Is she very sick? Shall I come too?"

"No — no," was the hoarse reply, "she is all right, and we don't want any one but Mr. Briggs, and don't want any one to know anything about it."

This aroused the suspicions of Mrs. Briggs, who felt that things were not all right, and she did all she could to prevent her husband from going, fearing she should never see him again.

"I don't know but the Salem witches are coming around in these days," said Mrs. Briggs, trying to assign some cause for this midnight visit. However, Mr. Briggs entertained no such fears, and doing what he could to quiet his somewhat alarmed companion, started out into the darkness of the night and went off in the direction of the Pendletons with a tall figure, that to Mrs. Briggs, as she saw it through the window, seemed twice the height of Saul.

The two walked on in silence. Saul was too much ashamed to speak, and as Mr. Briggs did not know the nature of the trouble, he did not feel at liberty to speak from fear of hurting the feelings of his midnight companion. On entering the house, he at once saw by the aid of the fire, and the dim, flickering candle, Seth, Sally and Priscilla sitting as silent as statues. The silence was soon broken by Seth, who said, "What did I tell you, Mr. Briggs! They are cheating me out of my part, if you don't know it; they have told me as much; they have done something, and we want you to settle the matter."

The confession was made, and the tin lantern was brought forth. It was seldom used and had been lighted but a few times since the eventful night after the burial of the father, and before Mr. Briggs took possession of the property and the mysterious room. The mice had visited the candle since it was

last lighted, but this was unnoticed in the excitement of the hour, and the dim rays seemed struggling to shine out through the irregular holes that were partially covered with a coating of spider's webs.

With the lantern in one hand and a shovel in the other, Sally took the lead, followed closely by the other three, while Mr. Briggs attended them, all the time wondering what the case could be. Out into the midnight darkness they go, across the road, through a gateway into the cow yard, over a wall to the rear of an old wood colored building known as the mill house; here they halt.

"There," said Sally, relapsing into silence.

"That's a hen coop," said Mr. Briggs.

"Take it up and dig," said Sally, passing the shovel. Sally seemed to be the only active one in the revelation.



"Take it up and dig," said Sally.

Mr. Briggs removed the old frame, and by the few flickering rays that shone from the fast declining candle, put in the shovel, which had evidently been used but little for many years. The frost hindered his progress, but after a few persistent efforts, he struck something hard.

"There," said Sally, "there it is, I s'pose."

"What?" shouted Seth, for his first utterance since the family left the house.

"What?" said Sally, repeating the question, "what you have made all of this fuss about."

Mr. Briggs rested on his shovel while the conversation waxed earnest and hot. One not so well acquainted with the family would have been alarmed as they raised their voices and shook their fists at each other in the frosty atmosphere of that hour.

"I suppose you have buried there what you intended to spread on, when you married Joe Nibbs," said Seth to Sally with much emphasis; "but I'll spoil your fun and show up all three of you," he continued.

Mr. Briggs now mistrusted the whole affair, and said in a tone and air of authority, "Whatever there is here is for me, as administrator, to take care of. That I shall do, so you may all stand back while I see what kind of a crop we are going to harvest here at midnight."

He stooped down and worked with his hands until he found the edge of a board, which he lifted, just as the candle flickered and went out. Seth, being an inveterate smoker, had a plenty of tinder in his box and vainly tried to strike a spark into it from his flint and steel, but all to no purpose; the candle was nearly gone when they lighted it for this search.

Mr. Briggs worked away by the light of the stars,

not thinking it best to venture to ask the assistance of either of the four who stood by. At length he loosened the great earthen vessel, from which he had removed the cover, but the falling earth had so completely hidden the contents that he could not tell what he had found. He took up the heavy burden and gave command for all to follow. No order was ever more readily obeyed. Seth kept a close eye on the leader. Upon entering the house, Mr. Briggs gave further orders to the anxious and shame-faced followers, so that when he lighted a fresh candle they sat in the four corners of the room, or as nearly so as the furniture would allow, while the earth-covered receptacle which he had brought in stood on the table in front of the fireplace.

Mr. Briggs saw at a glance what the nature of the contents was, and turned the jar upside down and left nothing but a heap of coin with a mixing of earth on the table. Looking at the pile before him, and then from one to another of the three who had caused this disturbance, Mr. Briggs remarked, with a good deal of emphasis, "I want to know if you have carried on any more such work as this, and if you have any more of your father's property secreted, for I have the law to direct and uphold me, and I can make great trouble for you; but if you will confess all, I will proceed to do justice by each as well as by your poor mother, who is sleeping so quietly and knows no more of this midnight proceeding than I suppose she did of the night's work when you secreted it."

"Mother?" exclaimed Seth, "she's got enough, and I don't see what she has to do with this. If she has any of it Saul and the gals will git it away from her."

Mr. Briggs, still maintaining his dignity, glanced his large gray eyes from one to another, as he said, "If you are all willing that I should take one-third of this for your mother, I will divide the remainder equally, and you may each give me good pay for this midnight disturbance."

"If you will promise not to tell about it we will be willing to do as you say," said Sally.

Mr. Briggs was not to be hired, but he was never inclined to tell much of his business, and he went on with the work of counting and dividing; being more familiar with the value of some pieces than he was when he assumed the care of the estate of Hezekiah Pendleton, he could do this work more easily than at the appraisal. He first took the share which he thought lawfully belonged to the aged mother, who was sleeping as soundly as an infant in the bed-room near by. Seth took his share and started for his home, declaring that he and Ike Fuller would come over there and dig the whole farm over, but what he would find more.

"I guess your digging won't amount to much," said Priscilla, who held her portion in her apron with but little idea of the amount or value of the bundle, while Sally, who held hers tied up in a blue and white kerchief, said to Seth in parting, "I hope you will make better use of this than you have of some." Saul had already made haste to his room in the back part of the house and deposited his portion.

When Mr. Briggs reached home he found his faithful wife and Betsey sitting by the fire waiting for him. Mrs. Briggs commenced a series of questions, hardly stopping long enough to get an answer if one had been forthcoming. Unlike many people, Mr.



Dividing the Treasures.

Briggs had things that he did not tell to his wife, and the experiences of this night were some of those things that he did not see fit to reveal to any one. He drew a bundle from his coat pocket and handed it to his wife, saying, "Ask me no questions; everything that seems so shrouded in mystery to you is all right; and some day you may know it all. Until then, be contented and take good care of that package. The worthy couple again retired to their room, but not to sleep, for Mrs. Briggs could not be quieted with her husband's explanation.

Betsey had now become somewhat familiar with the Pendleton family and was quite a favorite with each of them. Her excellent taste had been put to a good use in arranging the wedding garments. She could not be easily quieted after this night's experience, and the early morning found her on her way to

the Pendleton home to resume her duty as dress maker, and possibly to get some more light on the strange affair that was still a mystery to her aunt and herself.

FIFTEENTH EVENING.

HEV. MR. JONES had made a decided effort to secure the esteem of the people of the town, since the death of their devoted minister, and from the manner in which his services were received at the raising of Fuller's barn, thought there was a good prospect of being called to the vacant pulpit. He was not, however, favored with a call to the pastorate, and would not have been if he had withheld the fact that Priscilla Pendleton was to be his wife and preside in the next parsonage that he should occupy. The people of this village had been ministered to by a most superior man, a true pastor and Christian gentleman, and they could not look to an ordinary man as a leader, and especially one who so earnestly sought the pastorate.

In the absence of a pastor Mr. Jones was invited to officiate at the funeral of the two young men who were killed at the raising of Fuller's barn. His services were unlike any that Mr. Whitford had ever rendered, and the people were more decided against him than before. Mr. Jones took the occasion to express, what many were inclined to believe, that

Fuller's barn was doomed for good reasons, and this did not meet with a kind assent from some of the influential people, although they entertained the same idea. Hannah Nibbs said unhesitatingly that Mr. Jones did it because he was in sympathy with the three Pendletons, who were not friendly with their brother Seth, a particular friend of Fuller's. Miss Nibbs had a reason for everything and did not fail to make it known.

A promising young man, fresh from his studies, came among them and was soon called to the important position. The services of installation were performed, and the whole village rejoiced in the kind dealings of Providence with them, although they never forgot the good man who was the shepherd of this people for many years.

From the time of settlement of the new pastor, Mr. Jones began to grow indifferent in his relations with the church, and plainly showed his disaffection; but as he was looking to the time of his marriage, which was fast approaching, his mind was fully occupied, and he did not manifest the extent of his feeling. The plans for the wedding at the Pendleton home were left to Mr. and Mrs. Briggs, and they were faithfully made, as was the case with everything they undertook. The outfit for Priscilla was completed under the skilful eye of Mrs. Briggs, and faithful hand of her niece Betsey, before the opening of the new year; and had it not been that Sally insisted upon having very nearly everything to duplicate her sister's, the day for the marriage could have been set long before it was. She, however, was persuaded to defer the making of her wedding dress until there should be an occasion for using it.

There were those who did not credit the rumor that the younger of the Pendleton girls was to be married first, and the family rule so disregarded, until Rev. William Jones and Priscilla Pendleton were "cried in meetin'."



"They were cried in meetin'."

The law required an intention of marriage to be made public three weeks, at least, before the event. It was allowed to be done by being read by the town clerk during the service of worship, or by a notice posted on the door of the meeting-house, as many other official proclamations were made. They chose the former method. On retiring from the meeting-house when the fact was first officially proclaimed, Miss Nibbs was heard repeatedly saying to the doubters, "I told you so; I knew 'twas true."

An early day in February was set for the wedding. Several loads of furniture from Boston had been selected by the associated wisdom and taste of the Briggs' with Sally, Priscilla and Mr. Jones; the entire funds coming from Priscilla's well-filled purse.

A wedding was a novel thing at the Pendleton home. No event of the kind had been witnessed there by the younger generation, excepting that of Uncle James and Aunt Molly, who, after a moderate courtship of twenty years, were married with but little ceremony. Priscilla's wedding was greatly anticipated by the family, even by Sally.

The day of the marriage was one of those in February when the weather begins to suggest the approach of spring; when the thawing of the early part of the day, and the freezing of later hours, render the travelling uncomfortable; when the farmer who has started out from his home in a sleigh wishes he was on wheels, and the one who has started out on wheels regrets that he is not on runners. The floors at the Pendleton home were scoured with extra care, as the Pendleton girls were well versed in that accomplishment, although Hannah had endeavored to give people a different impression. The floor of

the best room was sanded in the most grotesque figures. Every part of the old house was put in "apple-pie order," said Mother Pendleton. Few were invited besides the family. Seth was so embittered that he did not appear or any of his household. The relatives of the groom were very few and lived at a distance, hence his family was not represented. Mr. and Mrs. Briggs were selected to stand up with the couple, although seniors of the bride and groom; yet this favor they did not decline, while seeing the inappropriateness of the selection. Courtesy would admit of no other way than for the new minister to be invited to perform the ceremony, unpleasant though it was to Mr. Jones.

Early in the evening the little company assembled, Mother Pendleton in a suitable garb of black, with a fresh cap and kerchief of white crape to match, arranged by her young friend, whose excellent taste was fully apparent. Saul was put into a "bran new suit of store clothes" as he termed them, being the first that he ever had which were not cut and made by his mother and sisters. The broad ruffles of his shirt front, nicely crimped, contrasted strangely with the stubborn bristles of reddish yellow that encircled his face, while those that fell over his large, brown hands, contributed to his awkward appearance. A pair of boots of Larkin's best workmanship encased his feet. They were fully three inches longer than were needed and narrowed towards the toe, with an upward tendency. They looked and felt strange to Saul, for nothing but brogans of genuine cowhide had been furnished for him until this time. In this costume he took a position in a corner, and with an expression of perfect satis-

faction, maintained it till the ceremony was over. Sally was attired exactly like Priscilla, with the exception of the gown; and she did not fail to make it known that it would take her but little time to get ready for her marriage when the opportunity presented itself. Mr. and Mrs. Briggs were neatly attired and early at the scene, and Betsey accompanied them. Through her winning manners she had early won her way to the affections of each member of the Pendleton family, and although unconscious of it, she had brought more cheer to those clouded lives than all the coin of the mysterious room. The youthful minister, with his pretty wife, added character to the occasion. All the guests were ready; the fire in the broad open fireplace never sparkled more brightly; the old brass andirons never shone more brilliantly; no refreshment table ever looked more tempting in that house than the one now spread in the living room, dark and unattractive though it was; but the best table cloth was of immaculate whiteness, and the set of blue ware made a pleasing contrast.

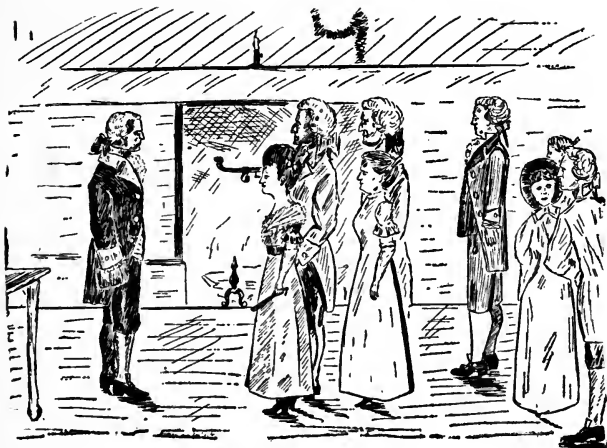
The bride was made ready long before the groom made his appearance, and the little company could do no less than pass the time in admiring her attire. The excellent taste of Mrs. Briggs and her niece had never been fully gratified before, for in no instance had either felt at liberty to expend all the money that she felt was needed to complete the costume of any one. When Mrs. Briggs prepared her own outfit, she was obliged to consider the uncertain state of her father's finance and could not be lavish; but here she had full direction and a well-filled purse to be used without stint, and the Priscilla Pendleton of

ordinary occasions was not to be compared with the Priscilla of the present hour; but one only needed to open conversation with her to see at once that she had none of the mental furnishing that ought to be found as adornments of one who was to occupy the position that she expected to fill. A beautiful silk of changeable hue, draped with a rich mantle of white silk lace, gave a graceful bearing to the tall figure. Her hair was arranged on cushions so as to stand very high. It required much time to dress it and was necessarily done the day before by Betsey. Priscilla was obliged to take her night's rest in a sitting position. The short cut sleeves of the dress gave opportunity for the display of armlets that corresponded with the drapery. Priscilla being very tall, Mrs. Briggs had advised her to wear slippers of a lower heel than was the custom. None but the extreme of fashion would fully satisfy, and such were purchased. Her height was more than that of the average woman, and was extended not only by the fashionable dress of the hair, but fully two inches were added by the dress of the feet, which was of the finest white kid. The embroidered stockings, of cream-tinted silk, showed off to a good advantage, as the fashion required the dress to be cut short. Priscilla was attentive to every detail of fashion, as the more uncultivated usually are.

"I'm afraid he is going to sarve us a trick," anxiously whispered Mother Pendleton, after a full half-hour's delay.

"Oh, no; I think not," said Mr. Lawrence with a soothing expression. "Slow and sure, madam, is doubtless the motto of Mr. Jones."

Presently he was announced as rising the hill. The



Marriage of Priscilla.

old white horse came jogging along, while the sleigh runners creaked and groaned as they vainly sought for snow or ice of any thickness on that southern slope of the Pendleton hill. Mrs. Briggs made it convenient to meet Mr. Jones at the outer door, and took the first opportunity to reprimand him for being tardy.

"Why, Mr. Jones, what is the trouble? We have been waiting a long time for you. It is now an hour past the time appointed for the ceremony. Where have you been?" were the words of the family friend.

"Why, madam, it has been quite a cold day, and I had to stop to gather my eggs before I started, fearing they would freeze, and this delayed me somewhat. The hens were rather dilatory to-day, and I came one short of the usual number after all."

This was the explanation given by Mr. Jones with

a good deal of complacency and ministerial dignity. The ceremony was soon performed, the feast was enjoyed by most of the company. It was a little doubtful if Saul fully appreciated it, as his ruffles were of great annoyance to him, and the tightness of "store clothes" made sitting quite uncomfortable. As Mr. Jones was storing away the last band-boxes and carpet bags in the bottom of his spacious sleigh, that had been driven up to the door, Mrs. Briggs ventured to say, "I hope you have left some one at home, so that Mrs. Jones will meet with a cheerful reception after the ride."

"I left the house alone; but it won't take long to blow up the coals and get a good fire," was the reply of the groom.

At length Priscilla was seated with a freshly stocked foot stove to keep her comfortable, and the old white horse was off with Rev. William Jones and his wife Priscilla.

SIXTEENTH EVENING.

EARLY on the morning following the wedding, Hannah started on a round of visits and a tour of news gathering. She had thought that Saul's intimacy with her brother Joseph might be the means of her being invited to the wedding of his sister. She also had some faint hope that Saul had a double interest in calling so very often at

their house; but now that Priscilla was married and gone, and she not invited as guest or servant, there seemed to be a new occasion for unrest on her part.

Hannah was one of those people who enjoyed being sent for on every occasion, whether of sadness or rejoicing; and wherever work was to be done she could make herself useful. She seldom refused, and then derived pleasure from complaining of her burdens. Her mother was at fault in this particular. She put her daughter forward, offering her services, and then continually complained because "My Hannah is always sent for and gets no time for rest." Hannah was not called to aid at the Pendleton wedding, and she manifested her disappointment by blaming one and another for what did not meet with her approval.

She first dropped in to have a word with Mrs. Briggs, whom she found very busy in the work of the dairy. "Well, Mrs. Briggs, is it possible that you can bring your mind down to such work on the morning following the great wedding?" said Hannah.

"Why, Miss Nibbs, the wedding was not great; on the contrary quite small, and I did not allow my mind to be disturbed, and I saw nothing to excite any one," replied Mrs. Briggs, while she continued moulding the lumps of winter butter. "Priscilla looked very pretty. She has a fine outfit and has furnished her house very neatly, and I hope she will be happy with Mr. Jones," continued she.

"Mr. Jones," said Hannah sneeringly, "he must have a taste to be happy with such an ignorant person."

"They are married," said Mrs. Briggs, "and it is

useless for us to trouble ourselves about the future in their case."

"I hear Seth didn't go to the wedding," continued Hannah.

"No," replied Mrs. Briggs, "Seth is not making the best use of his time and money; and there's Patty, poor woman, I believe she has a very hard time, so different from what the prospect was when she married Seth."

"I never saw any prospect worth speaking of myself," said Hannah, "and I should think those folks who helped on that match would feel ashamed. I hope the last match will be more gratifying."

The entrance of Mr. Briggs brought the conversation to a close, and Hannah hastened on to spend a while with Hepsy Page. There the burden of her conversation was the same as at the Briggs home, and when she had completed the trip and reached home, she had accomplished but little more than she did during her first call.

The Sabbath following the wedding was anticipated by Hannah, and others as well, for they felt sure of seeing Priscilla in her new garb. She was not the only one who was looking forward to the Sabbath when the newly married couple were expected to "come out bride." There were several people in the church who were not very constant; some unusual occasion, like the first appearance of a newly married couple, generally moved them to lay aside their rheumatism for a few hours. Many regular attendants were in their accustomed places before the usual time. Hannah was among them, and her head was plainly seen turning continually about, expecting each new arrival would be Mr. and Mrs.

Jones. James Wrong struck up his little fiddle, and the big one soon followed with its bass notes, but no bridal couple appeared. Invocation, song, prayer short and long, and sermon, followed each other in the regular order, and nothing was seen of Mr. Jones and Priscilla.

After service the congregation scattered, save such as, living at a distance, brought their lunch and remained until the second service. Hannah was one of them and wasted none of the time that intervened between the services. She had an interest in the prosperity of the church, and now that the new pastor was settled and it was certain that Mr. Jones was not to be their leader, she renewed her energy and spent a portion of the nooning in cleaning about the pews, "hoeing out" she called it. While making good use of the broom, she was heard to say to Mrs. Johnson, "Where do you suppose the bride is to-day?"

"I had thought of that myself," replied Mrs. Johnson, raising her head from a volume of Dr. Watts. "I hope Mr. Jones is not offended because we have not called him to preach for us regularly," she continued.

"I hope not," said Hannah, "but wouldn't he have showed it before if he had any such feelings?"

Here the approach of the bell-man brought the chat and the cleaning to a close. Soon the worshippers gathered for the second service, but the expected couple failed to appear. Mrs. Briggs felt it her duty to drive around by the home of the newly wedded couple after the service to see if any one was ill. She thought that it might be the eggs that kept Mr. Jones, and of course Priscilla wouldn't go alone on the first Sabbath.

"Expected to see you at meeting," said Mrs. Briggs as soon as Mr. Jones appeared at the door, "hope you are all well here."

"Oh, yes, all well, very well," replied Mr. Jones with a downcast expression of countenance. "I have concluded that as I am not good enough to preach for you I am not good enough to worship with you. I have a good congregation at home and I can hold services here, which I intend to do."

This he did, and Priscilla, who had expected to appear in church on the first Sabbath morning, as much as the folks had anticipated seeing her, was obliged to remain at home and sit, the only listener, through a long service, while her husband preached, prayed and sang in a most vigorous manner. Mr. Jones had not felt kindly towards the townspeople for some months, yet had not absented himself very often from church service; but now that he was married he began to show his indignation by staying at home and keeping his wife as well. Priscilla wanted to go very much, as was her custom, but thought it to be her duty to obey her husband, and never thought she had any right to express her preference, for she had always seen her mother do just as her father said. Mr. Jones adhered to this plan a long time, and Priscilla continued to be submissive as on the first Sabbath. She did not have an opportunity to display her fine outfit until the people had given up thinking of her as a bride. Being so utterly incapable of caring for her property, she gradually gave it into the keeping of her husband; while the cash that remained after the outfit was completed had gone immediately into his control.



Preaching at Home.

That Sally was ready and anxious for an offer was generally known, and there were many speculations in Larkin's shop about the future of the two Pendletons who remained on the hill. Thomas Stark, a widower with a large family of full grown children, thought this a favorable opportunity for him, and with but little preliminary work called on Sally and at once made known his errand. He was not a mile away from the Pendletons before Sally was at the Briggs house seeking the advice of her faithful friends.

"Now, if I thought it was my money that he wanted, I would refuse at once."

"Do you suppose it is love that prompts him to call and make this proposition to you?" asked Mrs. Briggs.

"He says it is," replied Sally; but how can I know for certain?"

"There is no way that I know of only to try him. Wait and see if he remains attentive," said Mr. Briggs; "I wouldn't give him an immediate answer."

Sally received this advice with apparent regret, and went away with a disheartened spirit, for she was anxious to have the question settled at once. She could not bring her mind to the quiet routine of duties at home after the months of exciting preparation had passed since Priscilla gave the favorable reply to Mr. Jones. She did so wish that her friends had been moved to give her different advice; but it was such as their judgment prompted. They were feeling somewhat disappointed over the manner in which Mr. Jones was treating Priscilla. They had never indulged a thought that her prospects were not uncommonly promising. Mr. Jones was a clergyman, had been a pastor of a large people, but having come to town from another state, they did not know anything of his success as a pastor, although he had spent some months in the neighborhood in his earlier years, before he had completed his studies.

Mr. Stark repeated his calls upon Sally and pressed the suit very urgently. On the morning following one of his calls, Sally hastened down to Mr. Briggs, carrying an orange and a package of confectionery which her suitor had left as tokens of his regard. On displaying the unmistakable evidences of love, as she thought them, she said, "There, do you suppose Mr. Stark would give them to me if he didn't love me?"

It was a difficult question for them to answer and please her and have due regard for their own impressions, so they made no reply at all to the one question, but started a different subject for conversa-

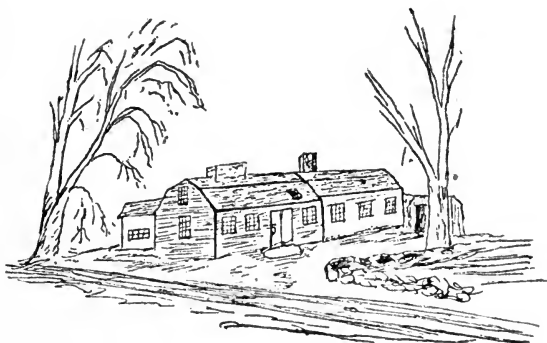
tion in which Sally saw nothing interesting. She soon gathered up her presents and went back to her home in a disappointed and unsettled state of mind. Mr. Stark was urgent; it was her first offer; Priscilla had married first after all the plans to the contrary; she would like to follow soon, but to go contrary to the advice of those ever faithful friends did seem hazardous to her. She yielded at length to the persuasions of the artful suitor and the day was set. But little time was required for the last preparations, and in May following the marriage of Priscilla Sally went with Thomas Stark to the Justice of the Peace, and the ceremony was performed, and they began housekeeping in the village.

The property was not fully settled, and it now became necessary for Mr. Briggs to give directions about the household affairs, and some one to assist Mother Pendleton was sought for. Hannah did say that if she could leave her mother she would go, but she was not called upon, and for a time Saul and his mother managed affairs alone. As Sally and Priscilla had gone from the home, the plans made soon after their father's death for the care of their mother had come to an end, and it seemed necessary that a final division and settlement should be made. This was done at once. Seth was given a new start. Sally bought a fine farm, and with her husband, Thomas Stark, settled in a most promising manner. She also had twenty acres of the best of the woodland that was near her old home, wisely preferring to have some of the farm rather than so much money. Priscilla, unwisely enough, gave all her portion over to her husband as she had perfect confidence in him. Being a clergyman, she would not have thought it

right to doubt his wisdom any more than she did the plans of her Heavenly Father. Saul kept his portion, as he said he intended to do, "Until I have a good chance to invest." He had learned a few of the terms and expressions rather imperfectly from Fuller, who, it was plain to be seen, was trying to get the best of him as he had of Seth.

While Saul and his mother were managing affairs at the old home without aid from any one, the day came for providing homes for the people who were supported by the town. Ike Fuller was at the sale, and being the lowest bidder, Suky Giles was set down to him for the next year at three and ninepence per week, "being a good strong woman and capable of doing a good deal of work." Ike convinced Saul that she was just the one for him to have to help about the house and do the milking, so they made a bargain and Saul took Suky Giles for what she could do, and Fuller was to get the pay from the town. While the woman was in good health this plan was not objected to by any one, but in a few months she was taken ill and Fuller was compelled by the selectmen to take her to his home.

Here Ned, very naturally, began to inquire about the custom, and grandina was obliged to explain. "In the earlier days," said she, "towns did not have almshouses as later, but once a year the people gathered and said how little they would keep a certain one for during the year, and generally the lowest price was accepted. The later plans for caring for the poor are very much better, as are many of the modern ways. In those days old and feeble folks were sometimes neglected and not infrequently abused. In these later times, it seems to me that the Christian religion has taken more practical forms, for no one can be long allowed to suffer from neglect or abuse without the interference of some of the representatives of the humane societies that are so numerous."



A Neighbor's Home.

SEVENTEENTH EVENING.

THE Pendleton property was fully settled. No one knew what the amount of the estate was, outside the family, with the exception of Mr. Briggs, not even his wife. Saul had an extra portion with the agreement "to see his mother through." For a while things worked very well, until at length Saul brought a housekeeper from the neighboring town who managed to get the control of not only Saul but his mother, and they both had implicit confidence in Silence Baker. She took the part of a suitor and soon met with a conquest. Saul was brought under her control completely, and Mother Pendleton was set one side as a kind of machine to eat and drink what was set before her and ask no questions. As the property was fully settled and out of the administrator's hands, Mr. Briggs had no legal right to say anything about matters on the hill, and the new mistress of the house didn't propose to

have him interfere, and even Saul was not allowed to go for advice on any subject, save one occasion when his favorite cow was choked with an apple; but the noble heart of Mr. Briggs prompted him to respond with as kindly feeling as had actuated him on any of the numerous calls from that family. With the aid of Saul he saved the life of the cow, but Silence very ungratefully showed that she had no further use for their kind neighbor after the life of the cow was assured.

Silence Baker could not have been more inappropriately named, for she was never silent when there was any one near by to scold. A few years had brought a great change in this old home. For a long time the Briggs' had been welcome at all hours and been sought for on all occasions; now they were the last resort, and Saul scarcely dared to drop in for a moment when on his way to the village. He was as much an underling as when the father ruled the home and all who were in it; but he received little or no sympathy, as he had brought this trouble upon himself. In all other matters of difficulty he had resorted to Mr. and Mrs. Briggs for comfort, but now he must endure it alone, and he was poorly prepared for such a mental burden.

Silence began to express a desire for a new house, and it was not an unreasonable request. The old dwelling was very much dilapidated; but Saul was attached to it as it had sheltered him all his days, and there were pleasant associations connected with it when viewed from his present standpoint. The darkest days of his early life looked pleasant to him now. He did not assent to the proposition of his wife, and this gave rise to a decided quarrel. Mother Pen-

dleton meekly took her food, ate it and said nothing, but longed for the visits of Mr. and Mrs. Briggs as of old, and even did venture to send for them by Hannah, who dared to call upon the aged lady "out of sympathy;" but Silence, who was as good as her name only until Hannah departed, so opened her battery of words upon the good woman, that she never sent for them again. When they came in response to the request of their old neighbor, Silence kept within hearing so that the good woman had no opportunity to tell her grievances to them or ask advice as she always had done and still longed to do; and truly she never needed it more. Her hearing was not impaired in the least, but she had a trouble in her limbs that prevented her from walking but little; so she was obliged to remain at home and hear the scolding of Silence; and when any one came she was not allowed to be alone with them long enough to tell her troubles. An occasional visit from the light-hearted Betsey was as a sunbeam to her lonely room, and not infrequently the gentle hands of the young friend deposited on her table a bunch of old-fashioned posies, that served to carry back the thoughts of the aged woman to the days of her youth.

Saul was obliged to give way to the persuasions and threats of his wife, and begin to plan for the new house. Silence considered Fuller's advice very much better than any that her husband could give. The house was to stand on the opposite side of the highway from the ancestral dwelling. It was built largely of lumber prepared from the trees of the old farm, and was months in process of erection. Saul, being entirely ignorant of the expense of building or of making bargains, was imposed upon at every hand.

Ike Fuller had secured his confidence, and now rejoiced in the fact that he had the place of Mr. Briggs as an adviser. It seemed strange, but it was true, that Fuller so got the control of Saul that he believed that Mr. Briggs had been imposing upon him; "feathering his nest," as Fuller called it, and Saul now felt relieved that he had secured for an adviser, one so capable, so kind and willing. He could not see how his brother Seth had been brought to ruin, and this blindness was due to his early lack of training. Fuller took the entire direction of building the house, and persuaded Saul, with the help of Silence, to erect a barn at the same time. Fuller provided the cash when any was needed for paying the bills, only asking Saul and Silence to put their names on a paper. So kind, they thought, to take so much of the care.

As the buildings were nearing completion Silence began to make known some plans that she had been maturing in her mind ever since the foundation for the house was laid. They were to go into the new house, and a lame old lady would not be an attractive feature of the residence across the street, was intimated by Silence. When this subject was suggested to Saul, he said that his mother could remain in the old house and they could provide her meals for her and look after her there. But no; Fuller had sided with Silence, and he said that the house must come down as it would spoil the view from the new one, and so it did come down; the rear buildings before the new house was fully ready. Silence concluded that Mother Pendleton should have a back room in the new house, and she was located there.

People who were familiar with the early history of

the Pendletons would say, as they passed by or spoke of them while in their homes, "What a change for the better. The old tyrant gone, a fine new set of buildings, how Saul with his wife and old mother must enjoy themselves." But how deceptive appearances often are. To be sure, the old tyrant was gone, and the old house with the other dilapidated buildings were gone and a nice set of farm buildings was substituted for them. Mother Pendleton was located in a room where the wind or storm could not reach her as it had of late years in the old house; but there was a new tyrant in the new house and a continual storm that seemed never to abate.

Fuller called about three months after they were located in the new house and demanded the first instalment of interest. This was astounding to both Saul and Silence. They had mortgaged the farm to Fuller for the money to complete the buildings; so Fuller said and so the papers indicated. They paid the interest and thought this was all, as they did not fully understand the nature of a mortgage, Silence being as ignorant of business as her husband. Saul was not to blame for this ignorance; but he must be the sufferer. It was the iniquity of the father visited upon the child. Great anxiety did not show itself on the part of Saul and Silence until a second demand was made by Fuller, and this brought them to the place where they were ready to send for Mr. Briggs, before whom the matter was laid. He found that Fuller had furnished the needful money; where he got it Mr. Briggs could not tell, as well as what became of the quantity that Saul had when his old adviser was dismissed by Silence. The records showed that there was a heavy mortgage on the whole

property, and the old lady had signed the papers as well as Saul and his wife, and she was in a fair way to come to want before she died if her life was prolonged to a great age. After telling the family what they had unconsciously done, Mr. Briggs declined to have anything further to do with the matter and started for his home.

Hannah Nibbs, who was ever spiteful after Saul married Silence, did not hesitate to freely say that Fuller took the money from Saul to pay the bills and then got him to mortgage the farm to secure him for the money that was never his. No one can tell the truth of Hannah's supposition, but she was not alone in that opinion.

It was too late now. The interest was accumulating; Saul was obliged to cut off wood to meet the payments and the value of the farm was fast diminishing. Saul had the whole of his mother's property in his hands through the aid or leadership of Fuller and Silence, and Mother Pendleton did not know it, yet the papers were duly executed. The old lady never fully realized how much she had. The repeated demands for interest prompted Silence to reveal another of her deep laid plans. She wanted to sell the property and go elsewhere to live; but in order to do this, felt obliged to make some plan to dispose of the old lady. She proposed to give some one an amount of money "to see Saul's mother through," as he had legally bound himself to do. This brought tears to Saul's eyes. He loved his old mother, but tears were of no avail with Silence. She accomplished her undertaking, and Mother Pendleton was literally sold to a man from another town, packed

up with her few furnishings, to be provided for by strangers.

"She can't get much worse treatment than she has now," said Hannah, when calling on Mrs. Briggs after this change.

Saul was blamed from one end of the town to the other, but he could not help it now. It was too late for him to have any influence; he was a mere underling. The property was fast going; through his ignorance he had been defrauded and his old mother as well. If this punishment could have fallen on the elder Pendleton, it would have been his just desert, but to come upon the innocent, upon that good, blameless old lady, was enough to arouse the passive to action.

On hearing that Mother Pendleton was to go to her new home on a certain day, Mrs. Briggs and her niece ventured to call upon her; and it was upon her, for no one but Saul was to be seen, and he was too much troubled to speak, so the kind heart of Mrs. Briggs deterred her from adding fuel to the flame that was already tormenting him. The grief of the old lady was very affecting to her friends. She begged to be led around where the old house stood that she might just look once more into the cellar. This was done; and on the arm of Mrs. Briggs and Betsey she leaned while saying, "There was where the old chimney stood where my husband and I sat beside each other so many evenings when the children were small. I spent many happy years in that house; but to be sure my husband changed before he died and was a hard man. I never thought I was bringing up children to treat me this way in my last years. Poor Saul, he is not to blame; he has gone over to that Jezebel of his."

Mrs. Pendleton was familiar with the Scriptures and had been quite a reader and thinker in her early days, and in these trying hours happened to apply the Old Testament story very aptly, for surely Silence was a woman of a very bad influence, and after knowing that she had been cheated herself, she was even more unkind than when she thought she was being shrewd and dealing unjustly with others. Two teams were seen rising the hill, which brought the trying scene to a close. The goods were packed into one and the good lady was taken into the other. Silence did appear to see that none of her things were carried off, as she said, with a look of mingled shame and contempt.

"I hope they will bury me beside my husband," were the last words that Mrs. Briggs heard from her friend of so many years as the carriage passed down the hill. No funeral procession ever bore to a grave a more afflicted mourner than was now being carried to a strange place and among strange people.

"God will punish them for this, you say. We must look farther and see. Where was Seth? We know that ruin has followed in his path. Where were the daughters? We shall see and also learn what other trouble is hidden in the homes of the Pendleton family."



A Neighbor's Home.

EIGHTEENTH EVENING.

WHEN the condition of affairs was known through the community, the selectmen of the town, by the advice of Mr. Briggs, decided to have the business reviewed. There seemed to be a chance for the one who had taken Mother Pendleton to throw her upon the town at his pleasure and also to treat her unkindly if he was so disposed, with no one to interfere. If there was any way to secure the town from this possibility and make the old lady's comfort more secure, they determined to do it. A lawyer was employed and the selectmen met with him in council, together with Mr. Briggs. It was decided, as the first step, that Mr. Briggs should visit each of the three children who had made homes for themselves, and see if they would not attend to the case and thus prevent the unpleasantness of a public investigation. This he very reluctantly consented to do, and in company with his wife Dolly, started out on the first convenient day. They first drove to the house of Mr. Jones to call upon Priscilla, whom they had seen but seldom in her home since the marriage, and had never alluded to business affairs since the last division of the property. It was plain to be seen that Mr. Jones was greatly disaffected and did not feel kindly towards any one in the church or parish. Priscilla was as much troubled by the state of affairs at the homestead as any one, and would gladly have prevented the arrangement made for her mother's care if she could; but as it was left for Saul to provide for the mother, and as he had wasted the property that was

allowed him as an extra portion for that purpose, she did not feel that she ought to do anything about it; and her husband was not willing to interfere or have his wife meddle with what was not their business. Having willingly consented to allow Saul all that was asked for the care of his mother, and as she was satisfied with the provision, they considered their duty fully discharged.

It was very apparent that Mr. Jones had the entire control of Priscilla's business affairs as well as of all domestic matters. Her will power, never too strong, seemed entirely lost in that of her husband. The Sabbath morning bell, calling the people to the service of worship, did arouse a longing in her heart to take her accustomed seat in the meeting-house, but to no avail. She was obliged to occupy a straight-backed chair in her best room and there listen to her husband's sermon, prayers and songs, participating in the latter as the only member of the congregation. She, however, found some satisfaction from regularly attiring herself in her best garments and sitting as though in the house of worship. Mr. Jones pretended to have a greater veneration for the evening of Saturday than for the Sabbath, and he required all worldly business to be laid aside by sun-down on Saturday night, and the Sabbath, so tedious to Priscilla, was very much lengthened, although after sundown of the Sabbath, she was allowed to look into Fox's Book of Martyrs and similar works other than the Bible.

Keeping Saturday evening as holy time was not peculiar to Mr. Jones. It was the custom of those days. The Sabbath was kept with great strictness. Nobody was expected to be seen on the street in time

of Divine worship except officers of the law, and they were appointed to search the town and look about for any disobedient or irreverent person. Any reading that would provoke a smile on a child's face was not allowed. Occasionally a parent was so indulgent as to permit a child to walk out in the fields after sundown on the Sabbath, but he was not allowed to pick a flower or gather a berry that he chanced to see during his release from the Sabbath confinement.

Mr. and Mrs. Briggs left the house of the Jones family with the consciousness that Priscilla had not lost her regard for her mother; but that she could not take her parent to live with her or spend money in her behalf.

They next drove to the home of Thomas Stark, and found Sally overjoyed to meet them, supposing that they had come for the day. Mr. Stark was not a particular friend of Mr. Briggs, and Sally's marriage was not really favored by him or his wife. He would not admit that Thomas Stark and Sally Pendleton were ever married. "Squared together," he said, showing his disapproval of their plan of having the marriage ceremony performed by a Justice of the Peace; but they were lawfully married. "Only a second-hand husband," Hannah said, and declared, perhaps enviously, that she would rather have none at all.

Sally was not aware of the state of things at home. She knew that her mother was away, but did not understand the occasion of it. Mr. Stark was many years the senior of his wife, and did not go about much, so she did not get the news. Hannah was offended with them and did not call, hence there was a very good reason for the ignorance. Sally was

grieved and indignant, and declared that her mother should come and live with her and promised to aid in paying the expense of the investigation; but when Mr. Stark appeared he put an end to that, which brought to light the fact that Thomas Stark had been providing some nice liquor of late for his wife, and that while under its influence, she had signed away the whole of her property, so that now she had no control of it whatever, and she could not do for her mother what her heart prompted. She loved "toddy," and had indulged her appetite, and through it and ignorance of business, had signed away her right and placed herself in a position where she might become subject to the unpleasant control of the grown-up children of her husband in the event of the decease of Mr. Stark.

Mr. and Mrs. Briggs left the Stark's for a call at Seth's, expecting no better results. Seth, as usual, was intoxicated; the children were caring for the house and barn, which showed that boys' work was not very thorough unless directed by some one who was capable, and there was no one here. Patty of old was no more to be seen. There was a worn-out figure of a woman in the house, but it was not Patty; her mind was shattered and there was only a wreck of the once trim, faithful woman, wife and mother.

With sad hearts Mr. and Mrs. Briggs drove to their pleasant home, having discharged their duty as servants of the town and as true friends of Mother Pendleton. They reviewed the condition of these four children of Hezekiah Pendleton in a most thoughtful manner, when duties permitted them to gather at their pleasant fireside, and contrasting their

situation with that of their own sons, who had become honored men in the world, they were more thankful than ever that they had reared their children in a different manner.

"Although Mrs. Briggs was not known by that name," said grandma, "when you, my boy, were introduced to the Pendletons, but having always lived in town and known of the outward life of this peculiar family, she could easily understand the inner workings of that part of their history which you have been told about, before Dolly Sprague left the home of her childhood and care of her venerable father."

"Oh, the folly of living for money," exclaimed Mr. Briggs, after seating himself by the little round table. "I never realized it more than at this moment. If the sons and daughters of Hezekiah Pendleton could have had the advantages that many young people have enjoyed, how different might have been their condition. The far-sighted minister, Mr. Whitford, looked into the future sufficiently to fear the sad ending of the Pendletons, and did all in his power to prevent the impending evil; but the moth and rust of this world had so far corroded the mind and soul of Hezekiah Pendleton, that it was impossible to make an impression upon him; and I believe, in the sight of God, he is the one charged with the blame; and," continued Mr. Briggs, "I shall be obliged to report to the selectmen that the children of Mrs. Pendleton can do nothing for her."

This he did. The authorities went on with the investigation, only to find that the custodian of Mother Pendleton was an unprincipled man, and that he had not been asked to give bonds for the fulfillment of his contract, and this he declared he would

not do, so that the fears of the authorities were well grounded and liable to become realities.

At the time of the investigation there seemed to be no indication of any wrong dealing on the part of the custodian of Mother Pendleton, and it was agreed that she was better off than when under the care of Silence Baker, as she was always known, for Mrs. Sparhawk was a kind, motherly woman, and to all appearances, intended to deal kindly with the unfortunate mother.

Ike Fuller was pressing Saul in every way he could, and as the months passed away it became apparent to Saul and Silence, as well as to the whole community, that he was as bad as Hannah Nibbs had represented him. About two years from the time when Mrs. Briggs made her last visit at the Pendletons, Saul made a hasty call at the home of the Briggs', and revealed his trouble to the ever-faithful friend of his parents, as well as of himself. That Ike Fuller was going to sell him out and drive him away from home, was a difficulty indeed, and a matter that Mr. Briggs could not prevent. It was too late. With the artful Fuller on one side and the tyrannical scold, Silence, on the other, life was but a burden to Saul Pendleton. He had seen but a few happy hours in the new house, and none since his aged mother had been carried away from the home of her right.

Mr. Briggs feelingly said, "I am sorry for you, Saul, but unless you can meet the payments according to your agreement, you must endure the consequences."

With the last ray of hope bedimmed, Saul Pendle-

ton walked up the hill to his home with a crushing burden upon his mind. It was of no use for him to go into the house, for there was no comfort beneath that roof for him. The true wife is one to whom a husband can unburden himself as to no other; but Silence Baker was not such an one. She married for money; it was gone, through her own folly, in part; but that did not change her feelings, but rather made her more irritable. Saul could not think of facing the harsh treatment that would be meted out to him if he went into the house and told the decision of the one in whom he had more confidence than all beside, for, notwithstanding the manner in which Saul and Silence had treated Mr. and Mrs. Briggs, they still felt them to be their only trusty, faithful friends; and really they were true to the noble character they had always borne, with reputation unsullied. It was too late for them to aid in this matter. Ike Fuller stood before the down-hearted Saul, in vision, like a fiend from a land of darkness. In the quiet of this midnight hour of his career, he was confronted by a power outside of himself. How long Saul suffered in mind in view of his condition, we cannot tell. All we know is, that when Silence became anxious enough about her troubled husband to go out and search for him, it was but to find his lifeless body in the old cellar across the highway, close by the chimney where the tearful eyes of the aged mother last rested before she was taken from her home.

Mr. Briggs, who was called, did his duty. The sympathy of the community was with the feeble old lady, who now thought of her son as at rest, where she longed to be. A grave was made for Saul near

that of his father, where a headstone had been erected with the inscription :

“Sacred to the memory of Hezekiah Pendleton, who departed this life, November 27, aged 94 years.”

Hannah did not hesitate to say that Ike Fuller was seen out on that memorable night ; but she was very thoughtless oftentimes of the feelings of others, as well as of her own safety in regard to the control of the law. As soon as the heat of the excitement was over through the community, Ike Fuller took legal steps and the Pendleton farm was sold to a worthy family from Boston. Silence determined to do some damage when she found she must leave ; so she stripped off paper from the walls, tore out such ornaments as she could take away, and so damaged the house that what she would have had to carry away with her was very much reduced in satisfying those who had bought the property. With her few scant bundles she left the hill, with what feelings we may never know.

“ I know that your mind lingers,” said grandma, “ with the good old mother, whose cup of sorrow, it seems, must have been full.”

She was trained in her early life by godly parents, and the principles of the Christian religion were so wrought into her very life that she had more to lean upon than her children had, and as one's early life becomes more vivid in their later years, so her early habits of prayer and dependence on God became more real — became a part of her being. The chapters of Scripture, and hymns that she had committed to memory when young, were now familiar to her ;

and, as she said, "they were her meat and her drink."

It is doubtful if one of her children had as peaceful an end as had she; but it was very different from what it should have been. Her last hours were passed at the home of a friend in her native town, and her care was paid for by the same authorities who annually sold the paupers to the lowest bidder. True friends administered to her wants. Priscilla tearfully closed her eyes, while Mrs. Briggs commended her spirit to God who gave it.

"Now, my boy," said grandma, "you cannot fail to see that the love of money was the root of the evil in this family, and to furnish you with a reminder of this story — of the downfall of this family, of the deception of another, and the follies of many individuals, as well as the virtue of others, I will give you this silver crown, which for years, doubtless, gratified the eyes of Hezekiah Pendleton as it shone in the dim light of the Mysterious Room."





THE SILVER CROWN.

NINETEENTH EVENING.

EZEKIAH PENDLETON was a Tory, in full sympathy with the Royalists, hence at enmity with all neighbors and people who set themselves against the oppressive measures of George III.

He claimed kinship with the house of Brunswick, the truth of which no one was at pains to verify, but many saw in his tyrannical disposition traits so much like those of the obnoxious sovereign that they were inclined to believe his claims were well founded.

He never manifested more joy than when the Stamp Act was proclaimed in the Province. He early made the acquaintance of Andrew Oliver, the appointed agent for stamped paper, and hoped to secure a quantity to sell at a profit to his town's people. He made frequent calls at Oliver's house, and was said to have been present when the effigy of the unpopular agent was burnt before his own door.

Mr. Pendleton, in his younger days, made his trips to Boston in the night, and his sly acts were not so easily detected.

The elder Fuller reported that his neighbor Pendleton was in a rage when he called at his home soon after the destruction of Oliver's house and the sacking of Chief Justice Hutchinson's. This convinced the people that the well-known Tory was aware of the bold proceedings, if not a sorrowful witness of the destruction.

He was served with a copy of the notice posted in Boston, which read as follows:—

“Pro Patria.

“The first man that either distributes or makes use of stamped paper, let him take care of his house, person, and effects.

“We dare. Vox Populi.”

There was rejoicing in the town when the Stamp Act was repealed, as there was among all who opposed the measure. The ranks of the Royalists were rapidly thinning, but few were now found in the little town who would shout with Hezekiah Pendleton: “God save King George!”

Mr. Pendleton heard the continual ringing of the bell at the training-field, and, foaming with indignation, galloped into the town, his faded scarlet cloak flapping in the breeze, reined up his steed, and ordered the bell-man to stop.

“You are one of them traitors, are yer? Do you mean to ruin the bell house?”

His authority was of no avail; the bell continued to ring, and he returned to his home filled with indignation.

Some of General Gage's troops were occasionally seen galloping up the hill towards Mr. Pendleton's, or dashing off the back way to Boston. As they molested no one, they were not disturbed until the time came when some decided action was apparent; then the officers of the town's militia set a guard and the movements of Hezekiah Pendleton were carefully noted.

The ministers who favored the cause of the Province were preaching against tyranny with all their eloquence, but the pastor of this town was silent on the question. "Not a fit subject for the pulpit," he said. He entertained as strong Tory sentiments as prudence would allow. He knew that a large part of his flock was against him. He was, in reality, in full sympathy with Mr. Pendleton, and made frequent calls at the home of this unpopular parishoner.

While the people of the town were making sacrifices to aid the poor who were shut up in Boston, Mr. Pendleton was slyly communicating with the King's officers, and supplying them with the best produce of his farm at fabulous prices and hoarding the proceeds away from the eyes of all. He boasted of having supplied the detested occupants of the Province House with his butter, eggs and poultry.

Mr. Pendleton declared, if the unsettled feelings ever culminated in open rebellion, he would pack his things and go to a province that was sensible.

"I'll never pay a cent of tax to oppose cousin George!" shouted Mr. Pendleton in town meeting when the question was being discussed of raising money to meet the demands. This was the first time that the Tory had openly proclaimed the degree of relationship to the tyrant across the Atlantic. Could

the arrogant monarch have seen his pretended kinsman we doubt not he would have been willing to sacrifice the aid being rendered his cause rather than have acknowledged the tie. It was on the last day of June of the same year that the freemen met at the meeting-house "To know and determine what measures are Proper to be taken at this present time of Trouble and Distress." The minister opened the meeting with prayer, as was the custom. Every word of his petition was carefully watched to see if any Tory sentiment could be detected. He was apparently praying to the people rather than the Lord, and knew it would not be prudent to give utterance to what was in his heart.

Mr. Pendleton was early at the meeting, and attempted to express his ideas on the whole state of affairs, but found it difficult to be heard, as the many were against him and his lordly cousinship across the water. The question of providing for the poor who were being sent out from Boston to be supported by the towns was discussed at this time.

With all the other burdens falling upon the people this was a severe test of the patriotism of the voters. When Mr. Pendleton spoke on this subject they seemed more willing to listen: "You'll every one of you be paupers 'fore you git through this, and it's what you deserve, too. Besides supporting our own poor, you see we've got a lot of them ragged rebels from Boston to feed," said Mr. Pendleton. It was voted that when this town's share arrived they should be sold at vendue, the lowest bidder to have one or more.

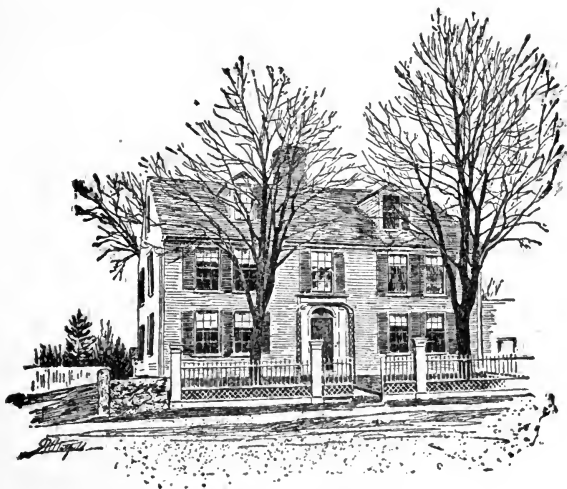
As the spring of 1775 drew near, an accommodating illness secured for Mr. Pendleton a relief from train-

ing with the militia company to which he belonged. He had prided himself on being a faithful military subject of the King, and was always on duty at all trainings and musters; but he would not use his skill in preparing to oppose the mother country. There was no escape for his sons; they must join the minute men and be ready. "Ready for what?" said the father, when the constable called in the exercise of his duty. "Ready to meet Gage's troops," was the prompt reply. "You'd better never meet them unless you want to be swallowed — the whole of you," said the Tory. "King George'll find us a harder load to carry than the whale did when he took Jonah on board," replied the constable, as he gave the official notice for Seth and Saul Pendleton to meet with the minute men on the following day for regular drill.

When away from the father's influence the two young men fell into line in good order and required but little watching.

When the alarm of the movements of the British reached the Pendleton home on the night of April 18, Seth and Saul responded to the message, and were early at Fitch's tavern, ready for marching orders. Hezekiah Pendleton boldly declared that he hoped every one of the rebels would be killed, not withholding his own sons from the sweeping denunciation. Even the persuasions of his old neighbor Maxwell, with whom he had fought the French, were not sufficient to turn him from his Tory sentiments.

It was fortunate that the Pendleton home was not on the line of the march of the militia and minute men of the town, or it would have been destroyed; for the Tory had displayed a rude design representing the Lion and Unicorn, the arms of the kingdom.



Fitch's Tavern.

Later in the day, when the sad tidings of the fight at Concord reached Mr. Pendleton, and the death of his neighbor, Capt. Wilson of the minute men, was announced, and also the wounded condition of another made known, he simply said: "I told you so. You ought to have known better," and then shut himself away from the sight of those who, in their sorrow and excitement, went from house to house to discuss the whole affair.

Mrs. Pendleton would gladly have gone to work, as did her neighbors, in the preparation of food for the army at Cambridge, but the head of the family effectually vetoed any such action, and succeeded in withholding his sons from voluntarily going into camp at Cambridge, which they were ready to do.

It soon became impossible for the Tory to dispose

of his produce to the British officers, and his greed for gain led him to look about for a way to make something out of the Continental army. He had refused to acknowledge the commissions of the officers of the army, but after all other sources of income had vanished, was ready to turn about, so far as there was money to be gained from acknowledging the authority of the Congress of which John Hancock was president. Mr. Pendleton had some personal acquaintance with him, and esteemed him as a friend. He had emptied his saddlebags many times at the Hancock warehouse, sampled the liquors and reloaded with merchandise for home and neighborhood use. He had hoarded away many a coin from the Hancock till. His love for money overcame his prejudice for those now in power who had a liberal portion of wealth. He carefully scrutinized each coin paid to him, and kept a set of small scales in which to test the value. When the Continental bills were issued he sternly refused to accept them as of any value, ignoring paper currency as long as he could, but at length accepted a quantity which he stored away, having a silent belief that it would greatly increase his wealth at some future time.

The officers of the town correctly interpreted the change in the attitude of the Tory towards the authorities, and when they were called upon to supply hay and wood for the army, refused to purchase of him. This was a great trouble to the man, for he had a large quantity of the best of wood, and here was a good market, with the town as paymaster. His sentiments had been too freely expressed to be overlooked for his advantage, and while six cords of wood and two loads of hay were being taken to

Cambridge daily from the town, none of Mr. Pendleton's stock would be accepted. This so angered him that he refused to pay the oft-repeated call for taxes. He declared he had no money, and dared the constables to make the collection. Men who did not cringe at the point of the bayonet at Concord and Bunker Hill were not to be baffled by one Tory, and they levied on his stock of oak and maple, and took it away for the tax to help support the army fighting against the cause that Mr. Pendleton claimed was just and right in the sight of all good men and God as well. Mrs. Pendleton did not sympathize with her husband in his unpopular sentiments, and would gladly have spun and woven to make blankets for the soldiers, but she was not allowed to do anything of the kind. It was almost impossible to find another house in the town, save that of the parson, where the wheel and loom were not kept busy in the preparation of supplies for the army.

When the town's share of Boston poor was put at vendue, Hezekiah Pendleton was in attendance. He saw a possible chance to make some money; all other families were busy in the interests of the "rebel army," and this was his opportunity. So he bid the lowest, and four of the poor, frightened mortals — one family — were set off to the Tory at ten shillings a week, "hard money," and what they could do. Their lot was hard enough — willing to work at home, but deprived of its meagre comforts, and parceled out in this way was cruel indeed. It was one of the many sufferings that war entails. The able-bodied men were in the army; the aged and infirm, with women and children, constituted the company of enforced paupers.

The town's folks generally regretted the result of this provision for the poor of Boston.

The only hope of just treatment being rendered at the Tory's home was the kind heart of the mother and the willingness of the daughters to aid in carrying out her wishes as far as it was possible.

The selectmen had received this notice : —

“ BOSTON, May 7, 1775. The bearer, Mrs. Mehitable Melville, and her family, removing out of the town of Boston, are recommended to the charity and assistance of our Benevolent, Sympathizing Brethren in the several towns in this Province. By order of the Committee of Donations.

ALEX HODGDON, Clerk.”

Catnip had been the family beverage at the Pendleton's before the opposition to the tax on tea and other articles was publicly announced. The poor fared the same as the family in this particular, but it was only the beginning of their hardships. They were too feeble to work, but compelled to do service on the farm, and scantily and poorly fed, only when something extra was slyly passed out to them by those who did not sympathize with the head of the family. They were allowed to serve the neighbors, after having done a day's work for Mr. Pendleton; and there were several people who were actuated by sympathy to employ them. The feeble mother in this family of Boston's poor was a capable woman, and her ability soon recommended her to a neighbor of means. She supplemented her day's work for the Tory by faithful

service for this new friend, for which she was well paid. Her hard-earned coin prompted the avaricious tyrant to offer her better food and more of it, and she thereby gained strength for her double service. It was not for herself; her mother's heart prompted her to exert every power to satisfy the yearnings of young children who could not understand why these privations were inflicted. She continued to perform these duties until illness prevented, when it was more difficult to endure the hardships, for they increased rather than lessened.

Mehitable Melville was the head of the unfortunate family. In addition to the privations at the Pendleton's, she had reason to believe that her husband had been killed in the army, or taken as a prisoner of war. Her last and only hope of securing anything beyond the bare necessities of life was a string of gold beads which she held as an heirloom and which she had frequently noticed attracted the attention of her Tory keeper.

It was the pastor who was expected to look after all cases of poverty or injustice in the town, and one might have wondered why it was that these poor strangers in his midst were so neglected. While Mr. Pendleton denied his family many of the necessities of life, he did not fail to occasionally leave a cheese or sparerib at his pastor's door. This inclined the clergyman to the belief that his parishoner was judged too severely. The fact that the parson and Tory were in sympathy on the political questions of the day might have been received as a partial explanation of neglect of duty.

Mehitable Melville was missed from her allotted

task one cold day, and her youngest child was also missing; the latter caused no anxiety to the Tory, it was the mother who must be found. Search being made, her hiding-place was detected by the voice of the child in seeming distress. It was ill and the mother was stealing her time to care for it. The privilege was not denied the woman, although Mr. Pendleton growled not a little at the "waste of time." The child grew worse. Mrs. Pendleton and her daughters did all in their power to aid and relieve the sufferer. Doctor Ballard came, his benignant face gleaming with light and cheer, and brought sunshine to the heart of the troubled mother, although he was obliged to tell her that she must part with the child. Once it would have been much harder for the mother to meet this sorrow. She was granted extra comfort in the home. It would not do to allow the good doctor to see what privations she had endured. He was a determined opponent to King George, having served the town as a member of the Provincial Congress. Mr. Pendleton did not refuse to allow the mother and child the comfort of an extra fire on the hearth, and other things for which she was told she must pay him, even to the sacrifice of her gold necklace.

At length the child died, and was buried among strangers in the village burial yard.

When life seemed the darkest to Mrs. Melville relief came to her troubled heart. The way was opened for the poor to return to Boston. Col. Melville was alive. Into the arms of her faithful husband she rushed, and to their former home they joyfully returned, where, as never before, they appre-

ciated all that could be enjoyed in a once-divided, but now reunited family.

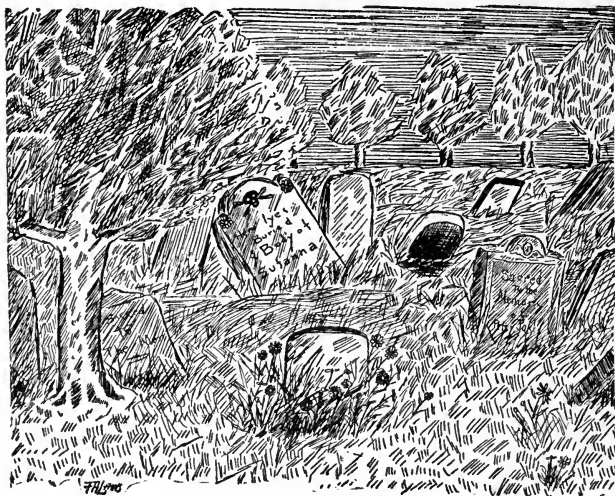
“But one dead lamb was there.”

Notwithstanding all the sorrow experienced at the home of the Pendletons, Mrs. Melville often longed to go back. It was the vacant chair at her fireside that caused these yearnings. Her husband had received part payment for his services in the army in worthless paper currency, and they now were obliged to struggle together for the necessities of life.

At length came relief to the colony from “His Most Christian Majesty, our excellent ally.” The fleet of D’Estaing was loaded with King Louis’ silver crowns. This precious freight was stored in Hancock’s building, where was the office of the deputy paymaster-general of the Continental Army. Col. Melville, with the others, received a share of these bright crowns, bearing the impress of Louis XV.; and the relief, so long delayed, was now at hand. Hezekiah Pendleton was the only man known by Mrs. Melville who could tell where the stranger’s grave was made in the burial yard, and to him was entrusted the duty of erecting a little stone at the lonely mound. He performed his duty. More than a century has passed, but the little moss-covered stone, half hidden in the midst of the grass and daisies, tells its story, and suggests to the thoughtful wanderer among the memorials of the past, an unwritten volume of sorrow and sacrifices, in part the price of our liberty.

To pay for this little memorial of a parent’s love, Mehitable Melville parted with her brightest crown;

and it was added to the hidden store of the Pendleton home, there to remain till death broke the seal, and the mysterious room gave up its contents.



The little Grave among the Daisies.

“Every name we read in rugged and half-worn capitals recalls some page of romantic history, some career over which the archæologist may linger with affectionate remembrance; wafts legendary stories from the dim twilight of the past, and recalls traditions which years may have buried amid the lumber of our recollections.”—*Tennyson*.

THE WITCH OF SHAWSHINE.

TWENTIETH EVENING.

THE Pilgrim's century was taking a last look at the world when the humble farmhouse of Solomon Gray received a new tenant; and the new century had but just dawned when Rev. Thomas Barnard dipped his goose-quill and entered in the records of the North Parish Church of Cochichawick, "Baptized Miriam, daughter of Solomon Gray."

"A precarious time to be ushered into the world," muttered the parson, when making the sixth entry of baptism on the first Sabbath of the opening year. These had all been born within a week, and through this ordinance the parents had tried to secure for their respective babes a safe passport to the realm of bliss in case the fates decreed that their little hands should be folded in death before their lips could be taught to lisp their Maker's praise.

No one can wonder that the parson shook his head in foreboding as he entered the name of the new-born child. The unsettled state of society in this town and the others round about cast a gloom over the present and future. The scenes on Gallows Hill, in the neighboring town, where the condemned witches had been hung, were still fresh in the minds of the people. It was well known that the mother who had welcomed her ninth babe with the rising sun of this Sabbath morning, was one who gave testimony against Martha Carrier in the trial of August, 1692.

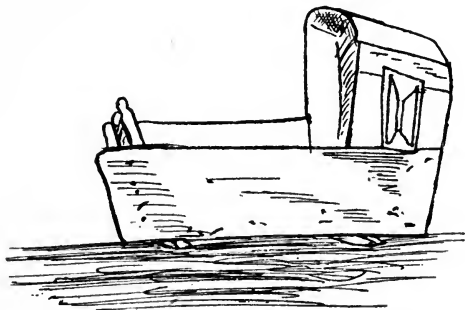
Born beneath the shadow of such a scourge as Salem witchcraft, and of a mother who had fallen a prey to the deluding influence, it would not be strange if this new babe, and others that were hastened out of the rude cradle, only to see their places filled by their counterparts in swaddling clothes, should suffer from unfortunate birth-marks.

There was a seeming rustle in the congregation in the primitive meeting-house when Parson Barnard dipped water from the pewter basin, laid his reverent hand upon the little brow, and, in measured tones, uttered the prescribed words: "Miriam, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." The deacons, in their elevated seats beneath the more elevated pulpit, were seen to exchange glances, and their wives, on the "woman's" side of the meeting-house were staring at their companions, while others, versed in the Old Testament Scriptures, gave involuntary nods of their heads.

When leaving the house of worship some were heard to say, "This one is to be a prophetess." When Deacon Goodwin had joined his family he dared to quote in this connection the song of Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, "May she sing to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Miriam was the acknowledged queen of the cradle, and entitled to the service of the older children, until in turn after two years she was tumbled out to make way for a burly successor.

The children growing up together were regularly seen in the family pew at church each Sabbath, and in the winter their presence could be detected by as

many breaths puffed out between the ornamental balusters of the partition walls into the frosty atmosphere of the meeting-house, like the steam of an equal number of teakettles hanging from a kitchen crane.



A Family Cradle.

Not one of the children of Solomon Gray was more regular at school than Miriam, the ninth. She was the first to answer the questions of the pastor when catechising the pupils in the old log school-house. Not one in the school was more sure of keeping her feet at the recitation-crack of the rude floor than this black-eyed girl; while at the home of the Gray's, Miriam was a leading member. At the age of twelve she could turn off a good skein of linen, and about match her mother in the knots of yarn from the great wheel, as they counted up a day's work in the busy season of preparation for the winter. She learned many of the out-door mysteries of the farm before reaching her "teens," and often put her elder brothers to shame by taking less time to get a brimming pail of milk than they required. The boys declared that "Old Chestnut" and "High Horn" knew when

Miriam pressed her soft hands to their flesh, and rewarded her gentle touch with but little effort on her part, but stubbornly withheld the white nectar when they sat down to press it from the udder. Whether the boys were right in their opinion, or whether they, as many others, did not like to admit the superior ability of a girl, we will not decide.

In the church records of a town twenty miles nearer the source of the river there was recorded, on the second Sabbath of the eighteenth century, the baptism of Benjamin, son of Solomon Fay. He was one of a large family in the town which for a while bore the name of the stream that winds through its eastern acres. After attaining his majority Benjamin bought of Michael Bacon the corn-mill on the Shawshine and began business for himself. The legacy from his father's estate was sufficient to purchase this place of business and the rude dwelling near the mill-house. The river was a convenient highway between the villages of Cochichawick¹ and Shawshine,² and in the absence of trodden paths through the forests, intercourse between the villages was commonly carried on by the way of the stream. On either side of it were remnants of Indian villages, and now and then a scattering group of the original owners of the soil could be seen in the distance. They offered no sign of hostility. Their war-like leaders were gone, and their courage had abated, while not a few had learned of the gospel of peace from Eliot and Gookin, and come to regard the white men as friends.

When nearing Shawshine the rolling and tumbling of the water indicated an obstruction in the channel, and the traveller was obliged to abandon his canoe.

¹ Andover.

² Bedford.

Here was the mill where Benjamin Fay had begun business. His customers were the brave pioneers for miles about the stream. The hours were few in the week when some one dressed in sheepskin breeches and homespun frock was not seen standing by, waiting to have his yellow corn ground into the steaming meal.



The modern Mill on the Shawshine.

Benjamin's need of a helpmeet was generally conceded by the people of the town. But he seldom went away from his business except on the Sabbath, and it was thought for a while that he was not fully aware of his greatest need.

"Benjamin, the miller, has gone down stream. He goes often these days," said the youth in charge of the stones to an inquisitive customer on an early Monday morning.

"I, I," says the inquiring farmer, who impatiently waited for his grist, "guess that means something."

The miller was never known to go so happily about his work as when returning from one of these journeys down the stream. The reason of this could only

be conjectured for some months, but at last became apparent. At a Sabbath morning service in the month of May, the clerk of Shawshine arose in his seat and read with measured words: "Marriage intended between Benjamin Fay of Shawshine and Miriam Gray of Cochichawick."

The announcement was made according to law on three successive Sabbaths, and so the people knew full well that the miller would not make the important trip down the river until the prescribed time had passed.

The months of extra spinning and weaving at the farm-house of Solomon Gray now began to have a meaning to the people of that neighborhood, for the same intention had been proclaimed to them by the clerk of that town, and Miriam's companions had learned who the sly visitor was that anchored his boat at her father's landing. The misses made haste to add articles to her stock of linen, and the matronly neighbors gathered about the quilting-frames and plied their deft fingers until "herring-bones" and "tortoise shells" were seen on each patchwork square. There were the venerable mothers, in cap and spectacles, who recalled the days of old, who had heard Mrs. Gray give that memorable testimony against the witch, and who had tossed their knowing heads when Parson Barnard laid his hands in baptism upon the infant brow. One did not fail to whisper what many thought: "Does the miller know that she may turn out a witch?"

The weeks passed rapidly at the village of Shawshine, and the miller's assistant was again in charge. The news spread through the village, and many a curious farmer filled his little sack with rye or corn,

and made haste to the mill, impatient for a fresh grist. The miller's boat was not at its usual mooring. This was the only suggestive sign besides the absence of the skilful miller.

"Will soon arrive," was whispered from home to home. Curiosity seasoned with fear filled the minds of many good people. Coming events had cast their shadows before, and the people of the village of Shawshine were not ignorant of the superstitions of Cochi-chawick. Not a few declared that their quiet neighborhood was doomed, for a witch was coming to take up her abode at the miller's house, and, what was worse than all, to be the miller's wife.

While the villagers south of the "Dam" were busy in speculation and wonder, the inhabitants on the shores of the stream twenty miles to the northward were making merry at the home of Solomon Gray.

In the pale moonlight of a June evening a happy group was seen to weigh anchors and paddle away from the farmer's landing. Such a fleet had never before glided over the surface of this Indian stream. The chatting in the bridal bark could well be compared to that of the robins already mated for their summer's bliss, while the friendly canoes which led and followed carried those whose mating was not yet perfected.

The moon seemed never to have shed more silvery rays than those which fell upon the bridal party as they glided over the water. On the marshy edges of the sluggish river could be seen now and then the purple petals of a tardy rhodora, and the overhanging maples dropped their brilliant keys on the bridal party as it neared the winding banks.

Solomon Gray had a titling of an income from an

“English Right” — an estate in the mother country. His annual remittance this spring had been taken in broadcloth of brightest scarlet with plumes to match.



The Bridal Party.

“A strange order indeed!” said the family agent, when enclosing Solomon Gray’s with those of the other nine, and giving orders to his associate across the water. The brightest tints of the early flowers could not be compared with the scarlet drapery that enfolded the graceful form of Miriam, the miller’s bride. Her full black eyes and raven locks were in

striking contrast to the mantle, while the brilliant plumes that decked her broad-brimmed jaunty hat rose far above the less pretentious costumes of the escorting party. It was a question whether it was not the brilliant moonlight scene that aroused the nesting red-breast and called forth his early matin notes as the ten canoes drew near the miller's landing.

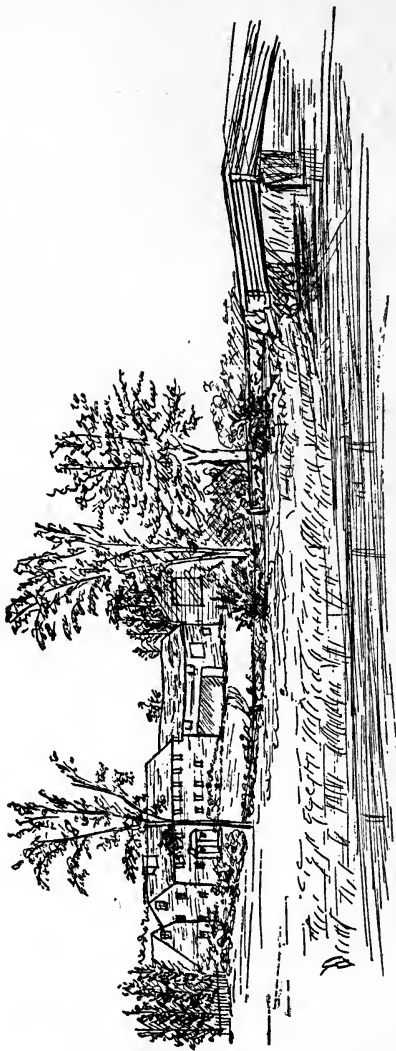
The weary eyelids of anxious neighbors had closed, and the youthful band who kept midnight vigil had broken up before the bridal party moored their boats, hence the merry company reached their destination all unnoticed. The flickering lights of numerous candles in the miller's home were not detected by any one at Shawshine, and the happy voices of the departing escort were unnoticed as the company weighed anchor in the twilight of early morning and left the miller alone with his bride.

More than one housewife of the town declared her meal chest empty that week, and the tall bin of Benjamin Fay was brimming full long before Saturday night.

"Never mind," said his assistant. "There 'll be a lull in business after Sunday, and you'll have no further use for me."

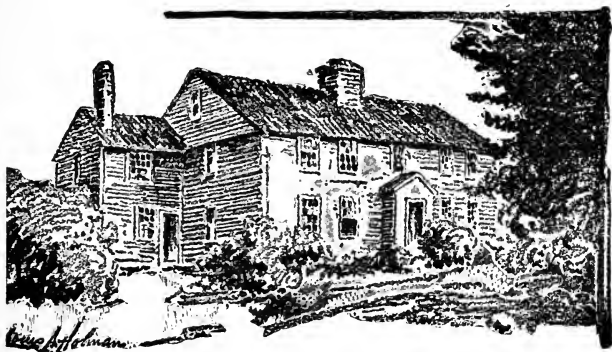
The miller was fortunately ignorant of the gossip of the town, for no busybody had warned him of impending evil; no traveller had asked a seat with him when on his pleasant trips up or down the river, and so his cup of happiness was full.

The homes about the river were scattering. Farther up the stream was the Shawshine house — an old Indian trading-post, where the natives were wont to barter with the white pioneers. The home of Captain Page,² the old Indian hunter, was not far



The Shawshine House.

away. These, with Michael Bacon's, that stood on a bluff farther down, and some distance from the stream, were the only houses of the neighborhood, save that which belonged to the miller's estate. The miller's house was often known as "number twelve"—a garrison in Philip's war, where Bacon's mill, now Benjamin Fay's, had been guarded from the skulking red men by two soldiers, allowed for its protection by the order of Stephen Tyng, the commander of his Majesty's troops.



Michael Bacon's Home.

The notes of the old bell never sounded sweeter to Benjamin Fay than on the morning of that June Sabbath when he placed the noon lunch for two in the saddle-bag, helped his bride to the pillion, placed his feet in the stirrups, and galloped off to the village meeting-house.

They passed many a bare-foot lad, with shoes in hand, who cast inquiring eyes, and not a few of more mature years slackened their pace as the miller's horse drew near. There were those who lingered

about as the bridal couple approached the house of worship, but all were too busy in their talk to offer assistance at the horse-block. Benjamin managed his nettling steed with one hand, and with the other aided his bride in alighting. The actions of the miller's horse plainly indicated that he was not accustomed to the burden of the morning, and the reinsman betrayed inexperience to the bystanders.



It required urgent circumstances to detain any one from this morning service, and the pews were well filled before the miller arrived. All eyes were on the family-seat of the elder Fay, not knowing that the young man had purchased all but the widow's thirds in the Fassett pew. So Benjamin and his bride

were well seated before many were aware that they had entered the house. The scarlet plumes were soon detected by the most observing, but some of the more devout had not grasped the situation until the congregation rose for the "long prayer," when all had plenty of time to "see the bride." The prayer was never so long as on this morning, thought Benjamin and Miriam. It was not altogether in their feelings, for it was of unusual length, as many had asked a share in its interest. Madam Jones had buried her husband since the last Sabbath, so she had presented a petition to the Throne of Grace that the bereavement "might be sanctified to her and her family for their spiritual good." Deacon Merriam had narrowly escaped a watery grave, and had requested the parson to "return thanks" for him. Phœbe Smith desired prayers that she might be safely delivered from impending danger, while others had requested and received attention in the morning petition.

The bride could not have selected a more unfortunate color for her costume, although it contrasted finely with her eyes and hair. A people who already believed that the new comer was doomed from birth saw enough in the brilliant clothes to convince them that there was truth in the rumor which had gone out from the last quilting of winter.

"I told you so!" were the whispered words from one to another, as the congregation broke up. Not a few of the worshipers made haste to the burial ground to eat their lunch, and offered no greetings to the miller and his bride during the noon intermission.

Time passed on. The miller pursued his business, and his faithful wife performed her part in the rude dwelling. The Rev. Nicholas Bond and his wife

made their accustomed call at the miller's home, but no liquor was served with the wedding cake. This breach of etiquette was not reported by the first callers, but the few parishioners who afterward discharged the claims of society did not hesitate to lay this omission to the bride. They were ready to charge any unwelcome change of affairs to her. The slightest unusual phenomenon was attributed to a mystical power which they had been led to believe was the birth-mark of Miriam Gray. Many of the people of Shawshine never called upon the new resident until the scarlet garments were temporarily exchanged for those of a more sombre hue, and some not then.

The words of the miller's assistant had now become true, and he was able to carry on his business alone and had much time to spare. Other troubles followed the promising marriage. A protracted drought caused the Shawshine River to dwindle to a trickling brook; the mill was silent; the farmers had no means of grinding their corn, and water for their cattle could only be obtained at great pains. Prayers were offered at the meeting-house "that the bottles of heaven might be unstopped." When the faith of the people had been long and severely tried, and their wrath had been kindled against the innocent wife of the miller, the equinoctial rains came on, and all nature assumed its wonted condition; but the superstitions of many of the people did not abate, and the most friendly advances of the innocent woman were rudely spurned.

Years rolled on, and new subjects for conversation came and went. Some parents did not fail to whisper to their children that there was a mystery about the miller's wife, and they were taught to believe that the scarlet cloak and plumes would yet appear to cast some unfriendly shadow.

Benjamin Fay and his wife were regular in their accustomed pew at meeting. They brought one after another of their infants and dedicated them to the Lord after the custom of the age; but all this did not change the sentiment of many of the people of Shawshine. Even the schoolmaster's reports of the kindness of Mrs. Fay during his "boarding round" had but little effect in allaying the prejudices of the people of the district. The black-eyed children of the miller found but few associates at the school, and they were the first to reveal to the faithful wife and mother the mystery of her life at Shawshine.

Benjamin Fay was faithful to his marriage vows, and shielded his companion from the sorrow which would have filled her life had she known that her peculiar treatment was due to her parentage and early life.

Age began to make its furrows on the once rosy face of Miriam, and to silver with gray her once raven locks; but her earnest expression of countenance plainly indicated that she was bent on breaking down the superstitions of years, and removing the jealousies of blinded ignorance.

The alarming scourge of throat distemper visited the colony, and the village of Shawshine did not escape. Child after child died of the dreadful disease, but it did not enter the home of the miller. "Few people ever call on the Fays" was the reason assigned by one, when the third little coffin was carried out from the home of John Whitmore, and the group of mourners marched off with measured step to add one more to the long line of new-made graves in the burial ground.

The heart of Miriam Fay was filled with sympathy

for her stricken neighbors, and so, after using all known precautions in her own family, she started out to the relief of others. The first thing that met the eyes of the afflicted Whitmores on their sad return to the surviving members of the family, was the scarlet cloak of the miller's wife. The dreaded woman was busily engaged in packing the throats of the remaining children with what seemed to Mrs. Whitmore to be a compress of the tansy that grew by her door, and a decoction of the same herb was being prepared by the open fire. "This is what I have used with my children, and by the blessing of God they are all spared to us." With these encouraging words Mrs. Fay left the family.

This woman had not failed to profit by her mother's instructions. She had often longed to help others in distress, but the scarlet wrap which defied the wear of a lifetime, was looked upon as a shroud of mystery, and had often debarred the innocent owner from administering comfort to neighbors in distress, and her inherited spirit of independence had added strength to the barrier. In one case, at least, the obstruction was removed, and the heart of Miriam Fay was found to throb with love for God and man.

The disease was arrested in the Whitmore family, and the simple means of prevention were effectually applied in other homes, and by people who reluctantly concluded that it might be possible for a witch to do one good deed with many evil ones.

Love of freedom was a lesson faithfully taught by example and precept in the home of Solomon Gray, and Miriam had imbibed the spirit. She had been called to mourn the loss of two brothers, who perished with Lovewell at Pigwacket in that

most deadly conflict of Indian warfare. This did not deter her from action: it rather made her more bold and determined. She was left one day alone with two soldiers, who had charge of the garrison; her keen black eyes detected a skulking Indian near the house, and failing to arouse the sluggish guards and convince them of impending danger, she took a musket and discharged it at what they said was only a clump of brush; but she had the gratification of seeing a dead Indian roll from his hiding-place.

Miriam Fay seemed inspired with the ardor of youth as the days of the Revolution drew near, and her bending form became more erect as she fitted out her sons for the army. She discarded tea and everything of foreign flavor long before the people of Shawshine adopted the bill of non-intercourse, and she was seldom seen in her scarlet cloak, for there was a tinge of royalty about those thread-bare folds. The minute-men were drilling twice each week in the training-field of Shawshine, and the wits of men and women alike were exercised to thwart the encroachments of the "Red-coats."

People of this town, like others of the colony, hardly knew whether they were looking into the face of friend or foe, as they went about their accustomed walks. It required but the slightest indication to brand one with the stigma of "Tory."

While the excitement was raging at Shawshine, Miriam Fay, then past threescore years and ten, was seen at early dawn, dressed in her scarlet cloak, dashing towards her home on the miller's horse. She was now classed among the Tories — a companion of Hezekiah Pendleton. The miller's life and property were threatened, and had it not been for the mystical

power supposed to be vested in her, the family would have been separated and the property confiscated by the government, before she could have proved her loyalty to the cause of the Colonists.

The scarlet broadcloth and plumes, although dingy with age, were a good match for the red-coats, which were plentiful in Boston, and not infrequently seen on the backs of soldiers skulking about this neighborhood.

The British generals, eager to get information of the movements of the Colonists, were ready to adopt any means, and extended a welcome to any one who offered assistance.

They had no doubt that the woman in scarlet was a friend of the Royal cause, and gave diligent heed to her story and plans. They agreed to meet her at a time and place appointed, and thankfully bade her good-night, as she dashed out from their quarters in her haste to reach her home before the break of day.

It was past the following midnight when John Whitmore was called from his bed by a man in military costume, and being mistaken for a Tory was entrusted with the secret of the distressed man and his associates.

A woman in a scarlet cloak had visited their headquarters on the previous night and agreed to reveal a secret, if they would come on the following midnight and bring a reward.

Believing that she had the key to the colonial storehouse, they had made sure to meet her. The supposed Tory in scarlet had led them by the light of a flickering candle through a subterranean passage and over the swollen stream by means of a narrow plank to a cavern beyond, where she had extinguished the

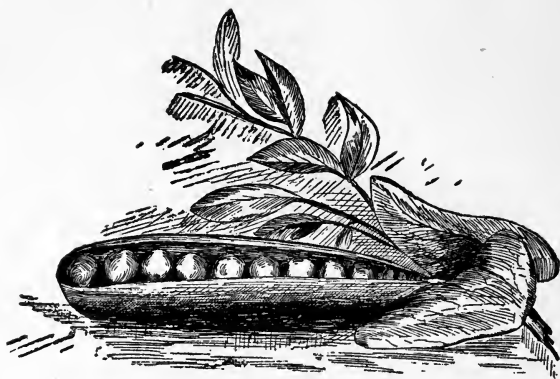
light and retraced her steps, pulled the bridge after her, emptied their saddle-bags of the golden crowns, and retired to her house.

In the darkness and mystery of the hour, foiled by the shrewdness of a woman, the proud generals were directed back to their quarters by one who was as great an enemy to their cause as the woman in scarlet had proved to be.

During the long and trying years of the war for independence a more loyal woman or more faithful spinner and weaver could not be found than Miriam Fay.

No one sent more helpful packages to the sufferers in camp and hospital, and all of the service was given without drawing on the limited treasury of the town or colony.

The helpful words of this patriotic woman gave cheer to the people of Shawshine in their struggles to meet the demands for men and money, and when they all assembled at the meeting-house to engage in a service of thanksgiving after the surrender of Cornwallis, the cracked voice of Miriam Fay, "the Witch of Shawshine," could be plainly heard through the congregation as it joined in the words of Miriam of old, "Sing to the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."



A POD OF NINE PEAS.

THE SECRET OF A WRETCHED LIFE.

TWENTY-FIRST EVENING.

THE sky was overcast with the floating clouds of a June day rain in New England. The soft, muddy road of a suburban village of Boston was desolate, save now and then a straggling boy wending his way from school. One delinquent halted to spat the mud with his bare feet and try his willow stick on the brindle cow that had jumped the pasture wall, tempted by the sweeter clover of the highway. He heard the slow and measured tread of horses' feet, hastened not by the sudden dash of rain from the floating cloud, and saw the village hearse coming towards him. With boyish timidity he hid behind the wall until, feeling that he was unobserved, he raised his head and counted one — two — all had passed.

Then with reasserted bravery he stood erect and meditated, half aloud: "Whose funeral is that? Them is the overseers of the poor in the first wagon, and that is John Spinal in the poor farm carriage. He keeps that place. 'Tis a pauper that's being buried —

‘ Rattle his bones over the stones!

He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns!’

That's what grandma used to sing."

With these lines running in his mind and thoughtlessly muttered aloud, the boy went about his part of the chores at the farm, and when putting the last armful of wood in the kitchen wood-box, he met his grandmother, with anxious brow peering from the broad ruffle of lace that protected the scanty gray locks of her honored head, who exclaimed:

"What are you saying those lines for, my boy?"

"Why, grandma! I heard you sing them with Aunt Urana, when I was a little chap, and was n't that a pauper's funeral that I saw this afternoon when I was getting home from school?"

"One of the old people at the poor farm was buried to-day, but you should not speak of her in that way," said grandma, reprovingly.

"Well, them two carriages had nobody in them but the folks that take care of the poor, and I never saw a funeral with only two carriages," continued the bare-foot lad, now growing somewhat thoughtful. "Ah," said grandma, "you have yet to learn that the worth of a person is not measured by the number of carriages that follow the body to the grave, although wealth is too often indicated in that way."

The curiosity of the boy was now fully aroused, and he continued his argument, all the time whittling the

knotty end of a pine stick on which his eyes were fixed.

"Did that woman ever have friends, and did she ever live anywhere else?"

"Yēs, my child, and when you want a good, long story, some stormy evening, I will tell you all about her, and try to convince you that to be poor is not to be despised, and that to be wealthy is not to be respected always; but grandma is busy now and must go about her work." So, with a loving pat on the head, she dismissed her favorite, feeling confident that the lesson would not be soon forgotten.

The evening soon came when the boy sat on the stool at his grandmother's feet, with his elbows on his knees, hands clasping his chin, and face upturned to her, who, with the heel of her stocking well set, started on with the foot and the story.

"Near by the house where I was born, in an old, red mansion facing the south, approached from the highway by a winding lane, lived a family highly respected by all the folks.

"They had a good farm and knew how to carry it on, too. The best of butter and cheese was made by Aunt Nancy, that is what all the folks called the good woman, and Uncle John, her husband, always had the best cows and fattest pigs in the neighborhood. There were three children, two daughters and a son. I used to go to school with them all. They were fine looking, but one of the girls had rosy cheeks and a complexion envied by us all. She was one of the best scholars and always stood well in her classes, and when we had a good, old-time spelling school in the evening, she was sure to stand up till the last or

near it. She was the youngest of the three, and the pet of the household and neighborhood as well.

“She was never taught to control the bad temper that she had by nature, and it often got the control of her in company as well as at home. You think it is hard when you can’t have your own way, and your little will has to yield; but had she been obliged to give up her stubborn will to those who were older and better fitted to say what was for her good, she might have had a smoother life. The few years of her school life soon passed, as they did with many of us, for we did not have the advantages for getting an education that you have nowadays. When we got through the district school we couldn’t go off to an academy; our parents could n’t afford that, so we got what we could at the old red schoolhouse, and then took our place at the spinning-wheel and churn and helped our mothers, who had much more to do in order to keep the family properly clothed and fed than mothers do in these days.

“But Miranda was an exception; she was not required to do anything; her hands were so soft and her skin so pretty that her mother and older sister did the work, and Little Miranda, as her mother called her, had her own way, — just as you often wish you could do; but it was bad for her, as it is for most children, for when they get older and meet with many people out in the world, they can’t always have things their way, and it comes very hard to them to be opposed and be obliged to yield to others.

“One day Aunt Nancy was shelling peas, while sitting on the broad stone step at the door near her bed of camomile and tansy, when, to coax Miranda to assist her, she said: ‘Now come and help mother get

the peas ready for dinner, and perhaps you will find a pod with nine in it, and then you can put it over the door, and the first boy who comes in under it will be your husband.'

"With all Aunt Nancy's good sense, she had a few foolish notions, and this was not the least. Little Miranda was easily persuaded to aid her mother by that talk.

"She counted and counted, and did find the charmed number. It was put over the door, and the petted and indulged Miranda was continually reminded of the foolish whim until her restless mind was fully persuaded that the first young man who should enter that door was to be her husband.

"In those days it was the prevailing custom for the minister and doctor of the town to go about making calls without any particular invitation, and to stop to tea was in the regular order of custom. So one pleasant afternoon, while the peas were still hanging, good Dr. Prentiss drove up the lane, having come from the village with the express purpose of drinking tea with Uncle John and Aunt Nancy. As his good wife was obliged to attend to other duties that appeared just as the horse and chaise came around to the door, he took his only son. While Paul, Miranda's brother, put the doctor's white horse in the empty stall, he and his son walked right into the living-room, in the place of going to the front door. Thus Samuel Prentiss was the first young man who passed under the peas.

"Little Miranda's eyes sparked, for that, she thought, was fine, and Aunt Nancy was rather pleased, and did not a little to impress the giddy girl with the idea that Samuel was to be her husband, and in fact

went so far as to playfully call her Mrs. Prestiss, and occasionally add, 'One of the best families in all the town, and well off, too, and Samuel is the only son.' Aunt Nancy succeeded in convincing Uncle John that the plan was a good one, and that the fates had decided it, while he declared that she was a 'notional woman,' but fell in with the notion. A singing-school during the following winter was looked upon as the opportunity for carrying out the plan. Miranda attended the school, and was entertained by the doctor's good wife when the weather was not suitable for her to go the long distance home. The result of it all was that Samuel and Miranda were married when in their 'teens,' knowing but little of the world.

"The parents were pleased on both sides, and others thought it was a fine thing to have two of the first families of the town united by the marriage of their children. Few girls had a better setting out than Miranda, — a good stock of furniture and fine clothes; besides, Uncle John gave her a cow and two sheep, and, as he said, gave them a good start in life. But neither of them knew what it was to get a living, and Samuel had been the favorite with his parents and indulged in every whim as much as Miranda had been by her parents.

"It was not long before unpleasantness arose between them, which was followed by open contention and disagreement.

"Samuel found other places more attractive than his home, and but few years passed before Miranda went home to her parents and Samuel was left on the road to ruin. They had one child, a source of much contention.

"Miranda now, more often than before, gave way

to her unfortunate disposition, but, being the only child at home, succeeded in passing the time in aiding her parents, who were fast growing old, and did not oppose her. Soon Uncle John died. Miranda had her portion of the property, which was not a trifle, and stayed with her mother until, with the advice of ever-ready Mrs. Meddlesome, Aunt Nancy thought she could get along alone, and Miranda made a home for herself in another town.

“Aunt Nancy died at a good old age. Another division of property gave Miranda another start. So, in living about, visiting cousins, who were too often more pleased to see her go than come, and often times doing good, she passed some years in the neighboring town of B——, until a complaint from the authorities of that place was entered in this her native town, and she was brought to the poorhouse, a physical wreck and penniless, where, after twenty years of unhappy life, she died at the age of eighty years, with but few relatives or friends, and none who could follow her to her grave. Had she died before the pod of nine peas was put over that door, this whole town would have been as one mourner, but, as you saw the other day, two carriages held the company, and there was not one person to shed a tear of regret. I will not presume to say who was responsible in the sight of God for the wreck of what early promised to be a happy life, but trust that this story, never before told, will be of profit to you and others who may follow you.”

D O N Y.

AFTER the foregoing Legends had passed through the press, there was received from a reader of the History of Bedford the following question :

“Why was Bedford called Dony?”

The answer is from the authority credited with the Legends. The early settlers, weary from their long journey to attend the service of worship, resolved to secure the incorporation of a new town, which involved the erection of a meeting house and the organization of a new church.

They were opposed by the people to the northward, but were more successful in their appeals in other directions.

The people to the southward not only gave cheerful assent, but they made gifts of money towards defraying the expenses of organization.

The agitators of the new town had sent out a cry for help and been successful, as were the inhabitants of Macedonia when they sought aid from Paul the apostle.

The pious zeal of some led them to select the name Macedonia for the new town. In failing to carry their point they manifested their gratitude for assistance by introducing the name Dony, forming the word by adding the colloquial ending *y* to the root of the Latin word *Dono*, to give.





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